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HOW CROQUET FIRST CAME TO HOLCROFT.

IN No. I. of 'London Society,' I had the honour of giving my readers a truthful, unembellished history of the harmonium inauguration at Holcroft. As they cannot but be anxious to have another leaf from our parish chronicles, I hasten to lay before them two letters which I have lately received. Of these, the first is elaborately and critically retrospective of the harmonium incidents; and the second contains a mandate that may be taken as introductory to the notable innovation which forms the subject of the present narrative.

The first runs thus:—

'MY DEAR HONORA,—Having read in the February number of "London Society" (a very able publication, allow me to remark) an account of the memorable occasion on which your cousin inaugurated, or tried to inaugurate our harmonium, I feel it my duty to give you my candid opinion on one or two points connected with that day of disaster as detailed by you. First, however, I must congratulate you on the general correctness of your statement, which in my opinion forms a remarkable contrast to the phraseology in vogue among the young ladies of the present day. No doubt you have observed the tendency to hyperbole which is just now creeping into society. The most tender consciences are quite at their ease in speaking of an ugly bonnet as "awful," or of a long walk as "tremendous." If slightly indisposed, they "were never so ill in their lives before," and "thought they would

have died" every day in the week. Their slightest inadvertencies are "fearful mistakes;" and so on. Bad habits, my dear Honora, bad habits into which our grandmothers never fell. Have you ever studied the theory of cyclic changes? If the world itself be subject to a round of seasons, why should not fashions and customs also be mutable? Already short waists and leg-of-mutton sleeves have appeared, and there is therefore no reason why we should not look for a return of the good old times of truth and politeness. I myself look for a reaction, and expect that our children (if we have any) and grandchildren will understand facts in the same proportion that our contemporaries overstate them. To return, however, to our harmonium. In consideration of the general correctness you have displayed, I have decided on overlooking the unhandsome remarks made by Mr. Rupert Ansted on my "organ style," which I think you might have entirely omitted without weakening the force of your narrative. I have yet to learn that I proved myself a worse musician than the much-vaunted pupil of the famous Dulcken. But that point I shall leave for the decision of the public; and when I inform my judges that Miss Holcroft drew out the stop handle on which she saw the tempting word "expression," they will still better comprehend her failure. Considering her utter unacquaintance with the delicate treatment this stop requires—or, indeed, her ignorance of the instrument altogether—it is no wonder that mat-

ters turned out as they did. Also, I must, as a duty, complain of your reticence as to my own indefatigable exertions to reconcile our parishioners to the change of instruments. You know that besides conciliating all the wrathful old people who querulously demanded that the Smarts should be allowed to remain in office for *their* time at least, I gave to each of our four musicians a handsome present as a superannuation fee out of my late lamented godmother's legacy. Certainly such services as these deserve to be placed on record, not to speak of others which my modesty prevents me noticing, but with which you had every opportunity of being acquainted. It is perhaps too late to enter a protest now, and I will say no more. I exonerate you in consideration of your good intentions, and pray that the world may mete out equal charity to me. We have so many sins of omission and commission to be forgiven us before we can enter the kingdom of heaven that we must needs forgive each other. I freely pardon you your errors; and even Mr. Rupert's offences are almost wiped out.

'Believe me, my dear Honora,
'Always your very sincere friend
'DORINDA SEELEY.'

Poor Miss Seeley! so I have hurt her feelings. Now for the other letter.

'MY DEAREST HONORA,—In the name of all method and order, what induced you to put the anecdote of Rupert looking over the gate into your harmonium story? Of right it belonged to another chapter. You really must finish our histories: open your desk at once, and do the thing properly. Say what you please of me, I do not care, only do not expect a long letter, for I am making a new flower-garden, and am busier than a prime minister.

'My dearest Honora's
'Affectionate cousin
'LAURA.'

As if I had never anything to do!
I who am my own gardener! and
Laura with hosts of workmen at her

command writes her orders with such coolness! I, too, have a flower-garden; and, besides, it is my month to keep the penny club accounts, and my brothers in India are expecting letters by the next mail; and yet, after all, there is no doubt that Laura is right, and that Rupert should have had a new chapter.

Nothing very important happened at Holcroft that autumn, until in the beginning of winter poor Mr. Mills had symptoms of clerical sore throat, and his friends agreed he must go to Hastings for the winter.

It was the best means that could be devised for his recovery; and as Mr. Seeley was quite satisfied to take again the sole charge of the parish, Mr. Mills bade us good-bye, and went away. There was much grief in the parish when he left, every one testifying it after his or her own peculiar fashion. Many ladies wept on his last Sunday, even profusely, and some old women sobbed and moaned so as quite to disturb the congregation.

Neither Laura nor I were of the weepers; my mother and uncle looked so unmoved we could not think of outraging their opinion, though we longed to laugh a little. When we came out of church some of our friends accused us of being hardhearted; but my uncle replied for us that we had exhausted our fountains before leaving home.

The number of respirators which Mr. Mills had sent to him was almost fabulous; and knitted comforters of the most unclerical hues poured in upon him. We heard of seven 'bosom friends' devoted to his comfort, and destined to go with him to Hastings. Such an amount of enthusiasm at first took us by surprise; and Rupert and we agreed that seven strait-waistcoats should be added. But on further inquiry we learned that the 'bosom friends' were inanimate, unsentimentally consisting of prepared rabbit skins. These, wadded, and lined with crimson silk, were intended to be worn across Mr. Mills's chest when travelling or exposed to inclement weather.

It was our poor curate's parting wish that we should cherish all his philanthropic schemes during his

absence, and that none of his improvements should be allowed to retrograde. We promised, and, I honestly affirm, fulfilled our promises. We visited the aged women, the sick people, and the schools; attended the practice of the choir; encouraged the penny club; and kept the books of the library. Thus the winter wore away.

In April Mr. Mills came back again to us but not alone. We almost forgot to ask if the sore throat had been vanquished, in our surprise at hearing that he was to bring a Mrs. Mills with him, a cherry-cheeked girl with whom he had fallen in love at Hastings. Holcroft was astonished, and justly so. Some said it was unfair, others that it was ungrateful; but for my part, I felt so uninjured that I could afford to welcome the lady very heartily. My uncle and Miss Seeley agreed to make quite a jubilee of the return of Mr. Mills and his bride, and took a mischievous pleasure in enlisting all the malcontents in their service. Every one was invited to offer gifts; and my uncle, hearing that Mrs. Mills was a musician, sent to Broadwood's for a piano for her. This good example was speedily followed, and Holcroft talked for many days of the couches, bookcases, tables, and other substantial presents which were sent in by enthusiastic Holcroftians to await the bride.

We had bonfires and bell-ringing; and the small boys and girls of the school cheered lustily as uncle Geoffrey's carriage dashed down the street with the cherry-cheeks radiant with good-humour and happiness inside.

Mrs. Mills was delighted with everything and everybody. She praised the presents, and thumped upon the piano from morning till night. Jullien's polkas were just then in the zenith of their popularity, and Mrs. Mills had brought the 'very last' and other novelties with her.

With untiring pleasure she pounded away at them, holding the pedal firmly down all the time. I do not believe we ever passed the windows that we did not hear Jullien or D'Albert; and it was a fertile

theme for conjecture with us, whether in case the Broadwood took to playing polkas of itself, 'The Drum,' 'The Annen,' 'The Bridal,' or 'The Very Last' would come first. Rupert Ansted always declared in favour of all four coming off at once, in which case I devoutly hoped I might be out of hearing.

In June we went again to London, and had another charming visit. We took more music lessons, chose new dresses, and went to evening and morning parties with untiring energy.

It was at the house of a friend of Laura's where we spent a few days, in the neighbourhood of Clapton, that we first made acquaintance with the charming game of 'croquet.' It were a work of supererogation to describe it here. At that time it was a novelty; but now every Smith has a croquet-ground at Smithville, and every fishmonger one at Haddockvale. It was only a few days ago that we were driving past Snugley—a small villa, which with its grounds covers about one-tenth of an acre—and we saw the daughters of Finchley, a retired man-servant of uncle Geoffrey's, playing at croquet with their visitors.

We were fascinated by the game. During the week we spent at Clapton, nothing could induce us to leave the Humes' grounds. Mrs. Hume offered to drive us about and show us the lions of the neighbourhood, some of the views of which she described as very pretty; but we found ourselves unable to relinquish the croquet. We thanked her and remained at home.

'Yes,' Laura said to me one evening when we were alone, 'it is the thing for Holcroft, Honora, we must provide ourselves before we leave London; I never met with anything so interesting. It is fit for both ladies and gentlemen; it is thoroughly feminine, and delightfully new.'

I agreed with her, and we discussed the various pieces of ground at the Hall which we thought would answer our purpose, the aspect of the terraces, and the inequalities of the different grassplots.

Then in our letters home we ex-

patiated on the delights of croquet, and announced our intention of introducing it at Holcroft.

By the time we arrived there, the strangest ideas had got afloat among our friends as to what croquet consisted in. Some said it was cricket called by a finer name, and another phase of the degrading American bloomerism, at that time so much talked of. Others affirmed it was a kind of needlework, bearing an affinity to crochet; and some, with a laudable desire to get at the root of the matter, sought in French dictionaries the meaning of the term. It may interest those who have a taste for such study, and probably have not the means of gratifying it at hand, to know the result of these researches.

Miss Seeley, who was highly practical in her ideas, found in her book the word 'croquet' exactly as we had written it, translated as 'biscuit.'

'Ah! yes!' she said, 'now I have it; some game played with biscuits. Some people are always for eating and drinking. It will be all very well for Miss Laura to play it at the Hall, where they have a house-keeper; but the poor Rectory could never supply biscuits to keep up a game for seven hours a day. To be sure one might contract with some of the steam manufactory and get the biscuits down at wholesale prices. But time enough for that; I must hear what the Fantails have to say.'

So to the Fantails she went.

'Emma,' she said, 'croquet means a biscuit.'

'Not at all,' said Miss Emma Fantail; 'you are under some mistake, Miss Seeley. We have just been giving a morning to the study of the word. We find the word *croquer* as an active verb is "to crunch," when a neuter verb, "to crunch, to eat up," or in painting, "to sketch." Now our English dictionary has no explanation of the word "crunch." There does not seem to be such a word, but the nearest thing we can find to it is "crunk," an obsolete word which means "to cry like a crane."

'Supposing crunch means "eat up," and my book gives "biscuit," we seem to have come very near the thing. It is eating up biscuits, you

may be sure. Rather tiresome to my mind, but all depends upon taste.'

So the Fantails and she settled it; and parted, each much impressed with the erudition of the other. As Miss Seeley drove home she met another friend, who pulled up her ponies for a chat with the rector's daughter.

'So you heard of the croquet Miss Holcroft is bringing back?' screamed Miss Seeley back towards her friend, for the phaetons had rather passed each other.

'Yes, Mrs. Holcroft read me Honora's letter. I think I have made it out. It is the abbreviation of *croquer le marmot*.'

'And pray what is that? My French is only bright when I have my dictionary in my hand.'

'To dance attendance upon.' A very pretty idea, indeed, provided it is gentlemen who attend upon ladies.'

'The Fantails and I made it out to eat biscuits.'

'Do not mind them — they are never up to the time of day. Good morning. *Croquer le marmot*.'

The four ponies went home, each pair their own way — Miss Seeley dubious about *croquer le marmot*, and still holding to crunching the biscuits. Before she had had time to take her bonnet off Mrs. Mills came in.

'You have heard about the croquet?' Mrs. Mills said, when they had disposed of the weather.

'Why, yes, but what does it mean? Your French must be fresher than mine,' Miss Seeley said, secretly resolved to enlist Mrs. Mills in 'crunching' Miss Phillips's *marmot*.

'That is the awkward part,' said the visitor, sinking her voice to a confidential whisper. 'The game may be well enough, but why give it such a name? I would not for the world say a word to hurt Miss Holcroft's feelings, such a kind creature as she is; but, Miss Seeley, how strange! Gluttons! gluttons!'

'What!' cried Miss Seeley, breathless with a strong conviction of the biscuits.

'The game is croquet; consequently those who play are *croqueurs*

and *croqueuses*—dreadful! If we called each other gluttons and devourers in English, how insulting it would be!—but put it into French, and the thing becomes quite the fashion.'

'I knew it!' said Miss Seeley, impressively, clasping her hands firmly on her lap. 'I knew it; but biscuits are not so monstrous as some other things would be.'

So saying she gave Mrs. Mills her version of the croquet, and together they derided the idea of Miss Philips's *marmot*.

'Everything tends to confirm me in the biscuit eating,' said Miss Seeley to her father that evening. 'What is the world coming to?'

(This day's adventures were afterwards related to me verbatim by Miss Seeley herself, who has obligingly offered to vouch for their genuineness.)

We returned from London, bringing two or three sets of mallets and balls with us. We left one set at my mother's cottage, and kept two more at the Hall in case of having a large party.

Laura issued invitations to croquet and luncheon for a certain Thursday, and, as far as my memory now serves me, such was the anxious state of the public mind at Holcroft, that we had not a single refusal.

'There is great curiosity, Miss Holcroft, about your new game,' Mrs. Fantail said.

'Such a large party to provide biscuits for,' said Miss Seeley, looking round the drawing-room and mentally counting heads.

'We shall not have luncheon until three,' said Laura, courteously: 'but I could not ask my friends to come so far and lunch upon biscuit. Shall we adjourn to the ground, ladies?'

Every one rose; and we went to the terraces, where two sets of hoops had been put down, so as to divide our party. Several chairs had been placed for such elderly ladies as did not intend to play. The curiosity was intense.

And now our labour began. Laura and I, single-handed, undertook to instruct some thirty people. It was a Herculean undertaking, the vast-

ness of which we did not know until we were fairly engaged in it. Some people are so stupid. I mention no names—I do not wish to offend any one; and croquet is often an illustration of the hare and tortoise fable. Some of those who were slow in learning became afterwards our best players. We took every measure we could devise to advance our pupils so as to give an air of spirit to our playing. We even hung printed cards of rules from the branches of trees in our vicinity that all who ran might read; and we had the comfort of seeing, by luncheon time, most of our guests pretty well initiated.

At last the gong sounded, and we went in for refreshments.

'Well,' I heard Miss Seeley say to Mrs. Mills, 'I cannot yet divest my mind of the idea of the biscuits.'

'Nor I of the *marmot*,' cried Miss Philips, laughing. 'What clever people we all are!'

'If by that, Henrietta,' said Mrs. Fantail, 'you mean we are the reverse, I differ from you *in toto*. The man or woman who gave the name is more wanting in cleverness, nay, in education, than we are. It is clearly a game which has a name, and yet has none. I do not know when my girls gave so much research to any one subject as to that word "croquet." What do you say, Mr. Ansted?—what is your opinion?'

Rupert lifted his head lazily from an ice he was eating.

'I am much of Mrs. Nickleby's, ma'am,' he said. 'Thank Heaven, I am no grammarian.'

When lunch was over we went out again, and, whether it was owing to the luncheon or the proficiency of the players, we did admirably. The day was an entire success. Every one went away charmed; the hours had flown by; and we parted, agreeing to meet again very soon for another day at croquet.

Every day from this memorable Thursday showed the value of croquet. No wonder it became a Holcroft institution.

Every one laid down a croquet ground—every one became as enthusiastic about it as Laura and myself. This was not, of course, just at first, for in all communities time is requi-

site to gain the social suffrages in favour of any new undertaking.

First the mothers had to agree that it was perfectly *comme il faut*; but after that we had few difficulties to encounter.

'Ah!' said one lady, who was more proud than rich, 'if a poor person introduced it it would never do; for instance, I could not afford to do it: but Miss Holcroft of the Hall can carry all before her. I question if even her cousins could have ventured on it with impunity.'

It was, indeed, the rage; existence was impossible without it. We gave up almost every other pursuit for it. As Laura said, 'Winter was at hand. She feared our climate would not allow of our continuing it then; we ought, therefore, to make the best use of what summer remained to us.'

It was very pleasant, to me especially so. It was nothing to Laura to excel: she was accustomed to do everything better than most people; but to me it was delightful to be, and to be acknowledged as being, one of the best players in the country. To be sure there is no great art in playing croquet, but it is something to do things better than one's neighbours.

And all our neighbours began by degrees to play well, still, as a matter of courtesy, Laura and I were always considered the leaders where we played. We had each our favourite colours: Laura had a pale-yellow mallet and ball, and I a dark green; consequently, she led the lights and I the darks in the famous matches.

Notwithstanding the number of croquet grounds in the neighbourhood, the Hall was the favourite place of meeting. Every morning we played, every afternoon we played, every evening we played. Visitors who came to the Hall put up their horses on purpose to have a couple of hours' play. Gentlemen dropped in and out as fancy dictated, until my mother, growing weary of matronizing our parties, ceased to fidget about us, and would employ herself in the house, or walk about the grounds with elderly ladies who did not play.

It was an extraordinary state of

things, Miss Seeley often said; formal morning visiting had quite gone out of fashion at Holcroft. Instead of exchanging cards at long intervals, people met three or four times a week, and ceased to remember who had last called at the house of the other. As Laura sententiously remarked whilst she watched from the library window some men rolling the sward, it was a wonder how we lived without it before.

I shall never forget the pleasure we had in those first croquet days—the delightful excitement in which we all lived. We canvassed each game when it was over; the good and bad play that had been made, and all the various turns in the wheel of fortune. We remembered how the yellow ball, returning from the post, met the black one going up, and was at once croqueted to the farthest end of the field, and how the light-coloured side almost shed tears at the sight, for yellow generally not only got up first but carried the balls of its own side up with it. We recalled how heartily the gentlemen laughed at our futile attempts to croquet their balls, and how mercilessly they returned the compliment, and sent ours away beyond the little Norfolk pines into the heart of the laurestina trees. Then when Laura's turn came to croquet how the gentlemen would crowd round to see her pretty feet, and laughingly entreat her to spare them at any cost to her party. How the elderly married gentlemen had the privileges of their age and condition in being allowed to hold back the superabundant flounces of our dresses, which fell over our feet when we practised this cruel part of the game; and, when opportunity served, sent our own balls forward, and those of our adversaries back.

The young men, too, had by no means the least share of the amusement: they 'chaffed' the elders most unmercifully, though they pretended not to be the least jealous of their privileges.

'I say, Rupert, how would you like a young stepmother?' one would say when old Mr. Ansted, though not himself a player, had been exceedingly gallant to Laura.

'How is Mrs. Books to-day, sir? I was sorry to hear she was ailing,' some one would ask another.

'Exceedingly well Mrs. Conran looks to-day. I wish she would join our party, she would be quite an acquisition. Prodigious fine woman she is.'

At which Mr. Conran would immediately become very reserved, and say little more to me.

It was more important to us who should begin the game each day than it is to veteran politicians whether the Government remains in or not. Breakfast was hurried over; and while Laura held a rapid conference with her housekeeper, the gentlemen skimmed the newspapers of the day, and then we all adjourned to the terraces. Early as was the hour, we always had some friends ready to join us. Never did I see people kinder and more anxious to make themselves pleasant.

Uncle Geoffrey laughed very much at us: he never could see any amusement in it; but it was a harmless pursuit, he said, and young people must be amused. Croquet was as good a toy as any other, as far as he knew.

Amongst all the fun and frolic, there were unfortunate people who had sometimes to leave the ground before the fate of their party was decided. On one occasion poor Emma Fantail was playing to the admiration of every one, when an inexorable mother tore her away from us, on the absurd plea that Mr. Fantail did not like to be kept waiting for dinner. (Just as if dinner were a thing of the slightest consequence.) Poor Emma! Two victorious lights were defending the goal from the onslaught of five darks, until the laggard lights could come up to the winning post: it was a most critical time. Our poor friend felt that could she but play twice more, her side would be materially aided. But Mamma Fantail kept crying 'Good morning, good morning,' as she shook hands with every one, and her daughters were obliged to follow her without delay. Emma looked, and I dare say felt, so miserable, that Laura good-naturedly promised to write her a note in the

evening and tell her the result. Meanwhile, Mr. Mills, who, with his wife, just then appeared on the terrace, played out the blue ball.

I have seen bad playing occasionally, but never anything so bad as Mr. Mills's on that occasion. It was wretched, disgraceful, though his wife did not seem to think so; and I remember the gentleness with which Laura in her note broke the news to poor Miss Emma that her blue ball had lost her side the game.

Then we organized clubs. Ours was of course 'The Holcroft,' and the next village obligingly gave its name to another, 'The Northcote.' We had matches, and return matches, and scratch matches, as the cricket players called them, without end. There was always a club requiring its revenge.

Then we went round to all our friends' grounds by turns, having a day at each in succession; which, as these matches came off in the afternoon, did not interfere with our morning practice at the cottage or at Holcroft Hall.

Things were just at this furious stage when the end of August approached, and September with its shooting was drawing nigh. One day when we were to play on the Fantails' ground the return match between the Holcroft and the Northcote clubs, Laura had called for us on her way. We were standing at my mother's gate, when Rupert Ansted rode up. His model farm was in Northcote, and he was on his way to meet us all at Mr. Fantail's.

'What punctual people!' he cried, as he reined in his horse.

'Yes, pray give me credit,' my cousin said, 'for before I left home I wrote two long letters, and fifteen notes of invitation, and here I am, ready before aunt or these girls.'

'Yes,' Ida said, 'Honora has no maid to lay out her dress, and put it on for her as you have; no one to darn a tear in a skirt.'

'You need not look so hot, little one, I am not blaming Honora.'

'I should have darned the dress, I believe,' said Rupert, 'for I tore it. But what is going on? Are you to have another Holcroft match?'

'Yes and no. Far better than

that. Papa's shooting friends are coming next week. Sir Henry Warden and all, and we are going to have a charming fortnight. I have just engaged Honora to stay with me to help me to entertain Sir Henry; and, Mr. Rupert, I have written you no note, but I must have your promise that for the next three weeks you will form no engagement without my knowledge and acquiescence.'

Rupert bowed. 'Promised, Miss Holcroft, neither for three weeks nor for life without your permission. Can I say more?'

'Certainly not: I am sure you will like our friends. Sir Henry is charming.'

'Who is Sir Henry?'

'A friend of papa's. We knew him in Italy, and met again in London. Is he not very agreeable, Honora?'

'Very,' I said.

'What a happy man, to meet with the approbation of the Misses Holcroft!' Rupert said, half satirically.

'And what is more,' I said, 'to deserve it.'

'Oh!' cried Rupert, with mock pathos, 'oh! that the day would come when in this world we should all meet with our deserts!'

'Speak for yourself,' I said; 'I sigh for no such day.'

'It is for you and such as you to sigh,' Rupert said, 'not for such as I am.'

'And what of me?' Laura asked, laughing.

'You!' said Rupert; 'ah! you would be carried off to some beauteous sphere, where we should never see or hear of you more.'

'Thank you, Rupert,' I said, 'earth is good enough for me.'

'Yes,' he said, half absently, 'and for many a one besides you and me, Honora.'

'And you advised her just now to sigh for such a day,' Laura said.

'How inconsistent men are!'

'So you may say,' he resumed, still musing as if he had only half heard what had been said.

'Do not let us grow serious,' I said; 'Rupert, your harmonium is out of tune.'

'It is flat,' he said, 'that is a fact. The time is nearly up. We should be at Fantail. I shall ride on, and mention who follows me. I have the honour to act as outrider. Au revoir.'

We found Rupert tolerably sharp again when we reached Fantail. Every one was waiting for us, and our mallets were placed in our hands the moment we reached the ground.

The play went on with great spirit. Laura and I, being of Holcroft, played on the same side, and played victoriously. Holcroft won the great games of the day. Our reputation was even still rising. The Northcote club wore crimson favours to distinguish them from the Holcroft; but for this day at least, honour was to the blue.

On our way in to luncheon, Rupert came and walked with me.

'I want to hear more of this Sir Henry—what did you call him?'

'Warden. You will like him, I am sure, Rupert. He is very pleasant, gentlemanlike, and well-informed; has travelled a great deal, but does not disagreeably plume himself upon it.'

'So you seem to like him too?'

'Yes. Very much.'

A silence of some minutes, then Rupert began again. 'So you are going to stay at the Hall?'

'Yes, there is nothing unusual in that.'

'Well, for my part, I see no use in it.'

'For that matter, we do many a thing that has no use in it. For instance, this party to-day is useless.'

'Not at all, it brings people together, makes them friendly and social, besides benefiting their health.'

'Now you reason for my going to the Hall, precisely.'

'Do not jest, Honora; I am serious.'

'But why should you be? I do not wish to laugh at you, but for you to laugh with me.'

'Cannot Laura entertain her friends without your assistance?'

'Yes, but it is pleasant for both of us when I am there.'

'That is no argument.'

'I am not going to argue it with you.'

'No. You are too positive. I wonder your mother permits it.'

'She will be there herself: I tell you, there is nothing wrong in it, Rupert. What notion have you got in your head?'

'There is nothing wrong with my head,' he said, as we reached the door. I went to pass in but he caught my hand, and said rudely, 'You are determined to go? Only one minute, Honora, answer me.'

'Release me,' I cried angrily, 'people are coming up.'

'Answer,' he cried, fiercely.

'I see no reason against it. I go.'

'Now, if you choose,' he said, which I might interpret as permission to go, either to the dining-room, or to the Hall the next week; as one was all I could do just then, I walked into the hall of Fantail Lodge, and, joining some ladies who stood there, went in to luncheon with them.

We had more games after luncheon; what in cricket circles would be called scratch matches.

Of course besides being members of our own Holcroft club we were honorary members of others. Both Laura and I thus belonged at times to Northcote. Now we were to have a game headed by Rupert for Northcote, for which he was at liberty to select honorary members. Mr. Herbert Fantail organized the opposition. I saw Rupert going round the field with a bag of crimson favours, and as he presented one to each lady with jests and compliments, she would bow and smile and pin it on. Thus he engaged his party, but I was not one. Studiously he avoided me where I stood; but still I fancied he watched his adversary to see if he enlisted me. As not all who were present could play, those only who were considered the best were selected. One of the first who pinned on Rupert's colours was Laura, and I saw her throw our old blue ones on a seat near. By-and-by young Fantail passed me with his sister Emma in conversation.

'I still want two. It is hopeless with any two of these here.' At this moment his eye fell on me.

'Is it possible,' he cried joyfully,

'the crimson have not got you, Miss Honora?'

'No,' I said, pointing to my blue favour.

'I never dreamed Ansted would have——' he stopped, he did not like to say 'neglected you.'

'You were thinking of my cousin, I dare say.'

'At any rate, I am the most fortunate of generals. Reckoning you a crimson I thought I still required two. My party is made up.'

We played, and defeated the crimson. Now and then Rupert and I met, or rather our balls did, and then I suffered. He played fiercely, savagely, and the force with which he croqueted my ball to the farthest possible distance would have made me laugh at any other time, but just now I could not. When it came to my turn I scarcely moved his. His laugh grated on my ear when I knew how badly I had done, and how I had all the will, and no power to return his compliments.

The game was finished, and Mr. Herbert Fantail complimented and thanked me for my aid. Entirely owing to me, he said, was his success. Even while he spoke, I saw Rupert bowing and apparently saying the same to Laura. There was more, however. In reply to something Rupert said, Laura unpinned the crimson favour from her breast and handed it to him. He made gestures of thanks which I saw, though I could not hear the words, and then Rupert placed it between the leaves of his pocket-book, and put the book next his heart. Then the carriages came round, and Rupert gave his arm to Laura. When I had found my mother and Ida, and we had reached the hall-door, Laura was seated in the carriage and Rupert still stood talking to her. So engaged was he that he scarcely saw us as we came up, and was recalled to a sense of politeness barely in time to hand us in. Still every word and look was for Laura. The last words I heard as we drove off were mocking ones in reply to Laura as she congratulated him on having got his harmonium into tune again. He seemed quite to agree with her.

The next day Ida and I had been

out walking, and when we came in my mother said—

‘Rupert Ansted has been here, Honora. He left “The Caxtons,” which he said you wished for.’

It was on my lips to say, ‘I never said anything to him on the subject of wishing for “The Caxtons,”’ but I checked myself in time. I was determined not to read it.

The next day my mother, Ida, and I went to the Hall. My mother went up first alone, and Ida and I were to follow after we had been to the school. As we came out of the building I was provoked to see Rupert riding up the street. It was too late to retreat, so I held Ida firmly by the hand and walked on. We were soon overtaken, and Rupert, dismounting, led his horse beside us.

‘You were out when I called yesterday?’

‘We were.’

‘I left you “The Caxtons.”’

‘You mean at the wrong house.’

‘How?’

‘I never remember saying I wished to read it—it was Laura. You have made a mistake.’

‘You said you had never read the book.’

‘That is a different matter.’

‘I hope you will look through it?’

‘I cannot promise.’

‘It would only be civil, after my taking so much trouble to get it, and leave it for you.’

‘I am sorry you did.’

A long silence, until we came to cross roads.

‘I suppose we part here,’ I said; ‘we are going to the Hall.’

Rupert stood a moment irresolute.

‘What an odious day we had at the Fantails.’

‘Now,’ I thought, ‘we are coming to the point.’

‘Had you never days you would like blotted out of your life, Honora?’

‘I have had a few such, even in my quiet life.’

‘Supposing I were a sorcerer, and had the power of doing it for you, might I blot out Tuesday?’

For a minute I could not answer, and he took my silence for coldness, and began again—

‘Say what you will, I deserve it.’

‘It is all blotted out, not a trace left.’

We shook hands and parted, and I felt very light at heart as I took my way Hall-wards.

That evening Laura said, ‘Advise me, Honora. Several of our gentlemen come on Monday: Sir Henry and others. Some on Tuesday. Papa has asked gentlemen for Monday: would it be judicious to have a sprinkling of ladies on Tuesday?’

‘I cannot advise you,’ I said; ‘for my own part I am tired of Millses and Fantails; but that is no rule for you.’

‘Yes, it is. I wish for your opinion exactly.’

‘I see no use in boring ourselves with them so soon again. Some strangers will refresh us.’

‘It is not a question of what will please ourselves most, but what will make our evening most successful. I am tired of our neighbours too. We have seen so much of them latterly.’

‘I am beginning to tire of croquet, too, Laura. One may have too much of a good thing, even of croquet.’

‘That is heresy; do not give utterance to such sentiments. We shall want it now more than ever; but it is a question of dinner, not croquet.’

‘Ask Uncle Geoffrey’s opinion.’

‘No use; he leaves such things to me.’

‘You will gain nothing by sending to the highways and hedges for Holcroftians. They will talk local politics and gossip, and the strangers will be bored. Left by ourselves, we can exist very well by means of the weather, the sporting, the new books, the Royal Academy, and the British Association.’

‘And after that,’ cried Laura, laughing, ‘we must fall back on Holcroft; so the sooner our strangers understand its topics the better. If we must eventually call in the aid of our neighbours, why not do it at an early stage? Then there is the croquet, they must learn to amalgamate there; so the sooner we bring them all together, the easier our part will be.’

As usual, Laura settled the mat-

ter, and sat down to write her notes.

On Monday we had only gentlemen to dinner, and we got on exceedingly well. Laura and I did all the singing and playing in the evening, and every one took his share of the talking. Sir Henry Warden and we were very glad to meet again. We had a great deal to talk about—old times, former adventures, and so forth.

After dinner Rupert Ansted and I were very nearly having another quarrel. Some miserable fate seemed over us, as if we were to be always disagreeing about something. He said, Sir Henry Warden was not the sort of man I should like; and on my asking why, he replied—

‘Because he is a man of the world.’

To this I asked, ‘What was a man of the world?’ and he only retorted that I was ‘fast becoming a woman of the world.’

I did not feel the accusation so deeply as he intended I should, for I only laughed, said ‘I had no objection,’ and changed the conversation. Happily we did not make a worse affair of it.

On Tuesday we had some tame croquet by ourselves, for the gentlemen were out shooting; but we all met at a late dinner. We had some Holcroftians; but I did not think Laura’s arrangements were so successful after all. Sir Henry took her in to dinner, and the whole time they kept up a conversation on their London reminiscences, this concert, and the other ball, fêtes at Chiswick, and evenings at the Italian Opera, in which, of course, no one else could take part. I would not join them for fear of seeming rude to Mr. Mills, who demanded my attention, and to Mrs. Mills, who was anxious for her share of conversation, and who despairingly found that Dr. Featherly was so deaf she could not make him hear anything she said.

‘Yes, Horace,’ she would call across, ‘tell Miss Holcroft all about the piano tuner—what a clever bargain we made.’

Already I had twice heard the history of the tuning of the piano; must I listen a third time?

Mr. Mills was very glad to begin

the story again; and while I listened to him, I turned one ear towards what was being said by others round the table.

‘Yes, yes,’ Sir Henry was saying, ‘Grini was charming that evening. And how grandly Mario acquitted himself!’

Then Rupert Ansted’s voice struck in—

‘Only Mario is an exaggeration.’

‘Excuse me, I did not catch what you said.’

‘Too much mannerism,’ Rupert said.

‘My dear sir!’

‘Yes, every one allows it,’ Rupert persisted.

‘Really I cannot say I ever heard that said before. Did you, Miss Holcroft?’

‘Why, you have changed your mind, Rupert,’ Laura said, ‘since last week.’

‘Human nature,’ he said. ‘We have all our vacillations.’

‘I am glad you include your own sex.’

‘By all means, though it is called a lady’s privilege; and some of them make the most of it.’

‘Life would be dull for them without such an outlet,’ said Sir Henry, laughing. ‘There must be so much monotony in a round of domestic duties.’

‘Of all things I should enjoy that tranquil humdrum kind of life,’ said Laura. ‘How delightful to feel neither joy nor sorrow, to be emotionless. I am sure I was made to be a nun, or a milkmaid, or a girl to sit at a spinning-wheel, or a—’

‘Yes,’ cried her father, overhearing her, ‘I do not doubt your vocation for still life, Laura.’

‘I like rural life,’ said Laura, enthusiastically, as visions of Wordsworth and Cowper rose before her vision. ‘Cattle drinking out of streams, sheep coming over hills tinkling their little bells, long stretches of moorland, with larks rising singing from their nests, and soaring out of sight.’

‘Then you could live such a life?’ Rupert asked eagerly.

‘It is the height of my ambition,’ Laura said, without considering for one moment how it would satisfy

her ambition to be dining on bread and milk, or other rural fare, and deprived of all the attendance and circumstance of dinners at Holcroft Hall.

I did not catch Rupert's reply, for Mrs. Mills had now struck in to the story, to which she feared her husband was not doing justice; and she went on—

' I said I liked my piano very high, and I was so well known in London for being particular, that the tuners never ventured to leave the instrument low. Upon this the tuner asked, "Would concert pitch be high enough?" but I was too clever for him; for, finding he charged no more for drawing it up above concert pitch than he did for leaving it below, I insisted on it being made high—so high, indeed, that I can barely touch F in "Annie Laurie." My husband says I make a scream at it, but what matter? I was determined to get all I could done to the instrument, it is so seldom a tuner comes round, I am told.'

Just then Laura began drawing on her glove, which talismanic act drew the attention of all the ladies, who followed her example. Finally Laura rose, and we all filed out.

When the gentlemen came in, Rupert took a seat by me, for the purpose (as he said) of abusing Sir Henry Warden. He had so many faults, and so few virtues, by Rupert's account, if any, that at last I took up the defence of our London friend. All in vain; Rupert only grew more angry, and I more pertinacious in upholding Sir Henry, until at last, under plea of looking for music for Laura, I broke up our conversation abruptly and left him.

The next day the gentlemen were out shooting all the morning; but after dinner Sir Henry, Rupert, Laura, and I had an hour's croquet. It was, however, anything but a pleasant game. Sir Henry and I were partners, and Rupert said we pushed our balls; and he cavilled, and revived old bye-laws, and made us all exceedingly uncomfortable. I was first through the first two hoops, and wished to exercise my privilege of playing either to right

or left as I chose; but Laura, to my surprise, pronounced this illegal.

' We have been all along under a mistake in doing so,' she cried; ' I am told it is quite wrong.'

Sir Henry politely stood up for my rights. Laura was positive; Rupert more than positive. I was too much hurt at Laura's manner to say anything; Sir Henry had, therefore, to yield to superior numbers. It was a trifle to get out of temper at; and yet we of Holcroft were really annoyed.

At last I said I thought it too dark for playing with comfort; and every one was glad to agree to my proposition, that we should leave our game unfinished and go within doors.

The next morning Rupert had a hasty summons to London on business, and we did not see him for more than a fortnight. When he came back the strangers had all left the Hall, except Sir Henry Warden. He was now quite like one of the family; we were gradually ceasing to regard him as a stranger; and he, on his part, treated Laura and me quite as if we were his sisters. We had the pleasantest rides and walks, and endless games of croquet. He was becoming also quite a favourite in the neighbourhood. He took Rupert's vacant place in the matches, mustered the forces, and animated the players. He went with us to drink tea and eat substantial cake at the Rectory; and spent a morning with us at the cottage nailing up the African vine and the Ayrshire roses that had broken from the trellis. He gave rewards to the boys in the school for their athletic games, and distributed sugarplums munificently amongst the infants. In fact he was fast becoming a Holcroft institution.

Then Rupert came back from London, and joined us each morning that he could spare from his model farm; and almost every evening at dinner. I was beginning to think—his temper had become so uncertain—that we were all happier before he returned. He took offence at such trifles that there was no possibility of keeping him in good humour. I saw his admiration for Laura was

intense, and yet he wished to play the tyrant with me. To Sir Henry he was barely civil.

In this state things were about the beginning of October. We were in the full glory of our Indian summer, and were seizing the last lovely days for our beloved croquet. As soon as possible after breakfast on one memorable Tuesday, we all met on the ground. Sir Henry and Rupert always led now.

'I think,' said Sir Henry 'we should draw for partners, Ansted; the question of superiority can never be ascertained, nor is it desirable.'

'I have no objection,' Rupert said; 'how shall it be?'

'Let us walk backward to an ash-tree, and each pull a spray; mark these, and then let the ladies draw from a hat.'

We laughed, consented, and performed the mystic rite. I drew Sir Henry's leaf, and Laura, Rupert's.

For this day, at least, we were very merry, until a little before luncheon Mr. and Mrs. Mills joined us.

'Pray do not stop,' cried Mrs. Mills; 'allow us to be spectators.'

So we played on, the lady watching us through her eye-glass. At last she approached me cautiously, and whispered—

'I see it all, my dear young lady.'

'It is more than I do,' I said; 'Fortune seems on the turn with us.'

'And a very good turn it seems likely to be, for some people at least.'

'It is well it is only croquet and not life,' I said, jestingly.

'Pardon me, it looks very like life.'

'I do not understand you, Mrs. Mills,' I said.

'Well, I think I can see as far as most people,' the lady said with an air of assumed wisdom that generally means 'I can see a great deal farther.'

'You see farther than I do, then, for I do not understand you yet, Mrs. Mills.'

'I congratulate you, Miss Honora. A person you know so well as Mr. Ansted is just the right man in the right place.'

I stared at her, fixedly, as searchingly as possible.

'A new cousin for you. Very pleasant for all parties.'

Now I understood her fully.

'Mrs. Mills, you are quite mistaken.'

'Not at all. Of course you are right to keep their secret. I do not blame you, nor do I force myself upon your confidence. All right, my dear. She might have looked higher, so might I myself; but love first, you know, ambition afterwards, or not at all, if you like that better. Miss Holcroft is doing precisely as I did myself; I hope her father will consent.'

'You are under a total misconception,' I cried.

'Pardon me. I know more than you think.'

'I am ready to hear it, solely for the purpose of setting you right.'

'Perhaps I should not mention it, but Mr. Ansted was with my husband for more than an hour this morning, closeted in his study. I know what that means as well as most people.'

'Still—'

'Ah! you do not choose to see. Very well, a few days will tell. You remember how you laughed at me for saying Captain Chance would marry that pretty Miss Harley. No wonder, how were you to know the captain had taken my husband into his confidence? Every one comes to Mr. Mills; his own late experience,' she added, giggling, 'makes him the proper counsellor.'

'And so your husband takes you, too, into the council?' I said sarcastically. 'Very proper.'

'If he does not I can put two and two together, and know what they make,' she said.

'So what Mr. Mills does not tell you, you guess?'

'Sometimes. But to-day's was beyond a guess; for as the study door opened I heard Mr. Ansted say, "The best match in the country," to which Mr. Mills replied, "Without doubt," and added, with one of those peculiar smiles for which he is remarkable, "Off to the Hall, no doubt?" which Mr. Ansted did not deny.'

This was almost the whole of Mrs. Mills's communication, which she had evidently been burning to make to some one or other; and as I was the first person she had met with who could be much interested I was made her confidante. Before we had time for more, the lunch gong sounded, and Laura came up to take Mrs. Mills in with her.

As I lingered behind the others, I saw Mrs. Mills eagerly relating something to my cousin as they walked, and I wondered to myself if she could have the audacity to give Laura the same valuable information she had given me, or whether she had made any more important guesses.

After lunch we came back to our game, but how cordially I hated it now. I was hurt with Laura, angry with Mrs. Mills, and still more angry with myself. My mood seemed to be contagious; every one played badly, and seemed out of spirits, for no one laughed or chatted as we usually did.

At last Sir Henry called out, 'Suppose we either walk or ride, this thing is getting so slow.'

'Willingly,' cried Laura; 'I am beginning to hate this croquet.'

'And I too,' I said, 'most cordially.'

'Let us ride,' said Rupert.

'With my consent,' Laura said, trying to laugh; 'Honora, come and dress.'

'I think I shall stay at home,' I said; 'I have a headache, and being on horseback always increases it.'

No one spoke for a moment, then Sir Henry said: 'A quiet walk under the river trees will do you more good. Let me be your escort.'

Before I had time to reply, Laura said haughtily, 'Mr. Ansted, if you will ride, order my horse.'

Rupert looked from one to the other, not understanding what had come over us all. No one spoke, but Laura turned hastily and took a path that led to the house. Rupert looked after her, then turned down another which led towards the stables.

Sir Henry and I were left alone; I, on a garden seat, and he standing before me.

'Are you ready, Miss Honora?' he said, kindly.

'I wish you had gone with the others,' I said.

'It would not have done for me, any more than for you,' he said, gravely.

I rose. 'Take my arm,' he said. I did so, and in silence we walked down through the grounds to a shady place beside the river, the quietest and most secluded spot that could be imagined. At a bend of the river was a seat of moss and stones, with a large elm tree shading it from behind, where it had been our custom in the summer months to bring our work and books, and spend the morning. Here I sat down, and Sir Henry laid himself on the turf at my feet, with his face turned away towards the river. How long we sat I do not know. Neither spoke, but the quiet was delicious. For a time my temples throbbed and confused my thoughts; but by degrees the affection subsided, and all became quite clear and plain. At last Sir Henry looked round. I thought he had been asleep, but he bore no tokens of slumber as he rose.

'Better, Honora?' he asked, gently.

'Quite well,' I said, determinedly.

He shook his head, assisted me down from my seat, and we walked home.

'I wanted a little quietness, that was all,' I said in explanation.

'I knew that,' he said; 'and now, Honora,' he continued, 'at the risk of being thought impertinent, I am going to give you some advice. Close your visit here. You have had enough of the Hall—for the present. So have I. I am going immediately. Do not be angry.'

'I cannot be when I see how well it is meant; but you mistake me; I am not—ill.'

'Then let us refrain from putting any name on what we severally require—or suffer. I shall be glad to think, when away, of one honest, kind heart, even though left behind me.'

I could not keep down the tears from my eyes.

'Nay,' he said, 'that will not do. We must close this conversation,

Honora. I wished to nerve you, and that was all.'

When we came near the house, I saw Laura reading on a rustic bench on the terraces. She had not gone to ride after all. She saw us, but did not raise her head from her book; so I passed on into the house. In Laura's bedroom was a second bedstead, which had been placed there by her directions for me soon after she returned to live at Holcroft. We both liked this arrangement better than if I were in a separate apartment. It was a pleasant time which we spent at our toilets, during which we had perfectly unreserved communications. To this room I now went to prepare for dinner, and thither Laura soon followed me. Neither of us spoke; and when Laura's maid appeared, instead of being dismissed shortly, according to custom, she was desired by her mistress to remain in the room.

How vividly I remember every moment and circumstance of that day. Laura's pale lilac dress, which lay upon the bed, looking so fresh and delicate; my own white one, rather the worse for wear, and its ribbon trimmings, are all as vivid in fact. As I write, I almost fancy I smell the flowers which Celeste, the maid, twisted and tied in bunches for our hair; and above all I yet feel the dreadful silence in which the half-hour passed.

Still without speaking, Laura passed down stairs, and I, stupid and tired, soon followed her. The maid was an excuse for our not conversing up stairs; and down stairs the rest of our party had assembled.

My cousin was more than usually brilliant at dinner. I tried to fix my attention on her, and not to see the effect her fascinations must produce on our party. At every sally I laughed, if not loudest, longest, and asked Uncle Geoffrey innumerable questions on all subjects rather than be silent.

'Now for croquet, I suppose,' my uncle cried, when we ladies were leaving the room. 'I shall soon lose my companions; you girls are so *exigeantes*.'

Neither Laura nor I answered,

and when we reached the drawing-room she rang for the 'Times,' a paper I had never seen her read before, and sat reading, or pretending to read, until my mother dropped asleep, and I strolled out through the French window and sauntered down the terraces.

An hour passed, and then I saw Laura walking about with our gentlemen; but I sat where they could not see me. I meditated an escape into the house, when I saw a servant bring Laura a note. As if it required to be answered, she turned back and went into the house. I remained some time longer hidden, and then tried to reach the house unperceived. My nearest way was through the library windows, which were half open. I had reached one, and given one look round to see if I were observed, when Laura, from the inside, rushed to the windows and sprang out.

Laura, but what a spectacle! From her feet to her head, which was scarcely visible, she was one bright pillar of flame. Blinded by the smoke, she was rushing on, I conclude, for the fountain on the terraces when I dashed forward and caught her in my arms. I tried to stifle the flames, but I suppose unavailingly, for in a minute I, too, was blinded. Not deafened, however, for I heard feet and voices coming nearer and nearer. Then I grew unconscious. My awakening was to find myself on a sofa in the drawing-room, with cold water falling on my forehead. I was too giddy to see who was ministering to me, but as I opened my eyes, a voice which I recognized as Rupert's said in a strangely agitated tone, 'Can her mother not be found?' And then from another end of the room I heard Laura's voice say, 'Quite well, dear papa. A little confused, that is all.' Then some one, Uncle Geoffrey, I believe, carried Laura past me, and I heard my own name pronounced by different people, and my mother stood hanging over me.

In answer to some remark she made, Rupert, who still seemed present, said, 'Allow me,' and I felt myself carried up stairs. In the corridor, Rupert's voice again spoke.

'Where?'

'To Laura's room,' I said, and my mother led us in.

Through a cloudy, confused medium, as I was laid upon my bed, I could see Laura lying on hers. On the same place where so short a time before the delicate lilac dress had lain was the wearer, with no trace of the pretty robe left. I remember Uncle Geoffrey coming once and saying, 'My poor children,' and hearing my cousin moan from time to time, and knowing by the sound that he was back, standing by her. Then Rupert and my uncle, and the doctor and his assistant, became a horrid medley for several hours. Towards midnight I heard Laura's voice talking to my mother, and I heard my own name.

'I am awake, Laura,' I cried. 'What has happened?'

My mother came over, and by degrees I understood it all.

Laura did not die; neither did I. It is one of the comforts of an autobiography, that the narrator and the heroine being one must survive.

The next day Adelaide Ansted came to help my mother and to cheer us, and by her came messages from all our friends.

Laura and I forgot our coolness at the last croquet party, and the gentlemen sent us books, bouquets, and messages indiscriminately. We never talked of Mrs. Mills and her last visit; but when she sent us several infallible recipes for the cure of burns, we sent our compliments and thanks, begged Adelaide to cut her a bouquet, and agreed she was as good a physician for the body as for the mind. This was the only allusion we ever made to our last croquet playing.

Laura had not suffered so much as I, or perhaps it was her elastic temperament which made her recover every ill so quickly; for the day I was able to be moved on a sofa into my cousin's boudoir, she was well enough to be taken out for a drive.

My mother arranged me comfortably, and saying she had something to do down stairs, left me. As she opened the door she said—

'You will probably have a visitor, Honora.'

'I would much rather not, mamma,' I said; 'I am sure I am disfigured, and I—.' But she was gone before I had finished my remark.

Next thing was a light tap at the door.

'Not strong enough for Miss Seely,' I thought. 'Probably Mrs. Mills.'

The door opened, and Rupert Ansted came in.

'My dear Honora!' he exclaimed.

'I have no hands to offer you,' I said, holding up the shapeless mass of bandages which represented them. 'You must accept the will for the deed.'

My visitor looked rueful, and took the chair I pointed out.

'Do you suffer much pain? Do I disturb you? Did I knock too loud?'

These and such questions did I answer; and then a silence began to fall. It was my turn now to take up the interrogatory.

'What have you been about since? How is the farm?'

'Now you have it, Honora,' he said, jumping up and stooping down by me.

'It will never do, that is as long as—as you are here.'

I looked the question I could not ask.

'Where you are I must be too,' he said, trying to laugh down his agitation. 'My harmonium needs two players.'

I had nothing to say just then, so was silent. Rupert went on.

'You must get well, Honora. I cannot do without you. I am sure you know that just as well as I do.'

Then he poured forth all he had thought and felt for many weeks. How, though Laura's brilliancy amused him, he had never wavered from his dear old love, until he fancied Sir Henry admired me, and I liked him; and then he talked to Laura that he might laugh and forget me. And then Mrs. Mills had told him she thought I was engaged to Sir Henry the very day of the conflagration, when he had walked down to the Rectory on

Laura's refusing to ride. And how he had taken the course he had thought best, and gone to my mother, and obtained permission from her to come and see me.

All this and much more he told me, and I confided to him Mrs. Mills's information to me, at which we both laughed heartily.

The sound of Laura's returning phaeton roused us. I desired Rupert to leave me.

'Now,' he said, in parting, 'do not look as if you had been crying, or be the least more ill, for I promised your mother not to agitate you.'

Laura came in, and lay down on another couch.

'I hope you had a pleasant drive, Laura.'

'Ah! there they are,' she answered, rather wide of the mark, and rising as she spoke. She stood behind the curtain, and smiled at some one underneath the window.

'I did not think I should be seen, but they both raised their hats.'

'Who?' I inquired, as Laura lay down again.

'Sir Henry and Rupert. Only think, Honora, papa allowed Sir Henry to drive me!'

'And how did that do?' I asked.

'And, oh! Honora, we are going to be married.'

I burst out laughing. I was too happy to talk of myself. Laura, after a pause, went on.

'If it were not for papa, Honora. He will be so lonely. I wish,' she said, as a brilliant idea struck her, 'you would come and live with him; he is so fond of you.'

'I am afraid I cannot,' I said, quietly, 'inasmuch as I am going to live at Northcote.'

'To help at the model farming?' Laura cried. 'Why did you never tell me?'

'I only knew since you went out.'

'Delightful!' Laura exclaimed. 'And we can have a double wedding.'

We had the weddings, but not both at once. My hands healed slowly, and we could not let Sir Henry and Laura wait. But ours was a quiet, happy affair, without any of the splendour fitting to attend the nuptials of the heiress of Holcroft. As Mrs. Mills said, 'It gave Holcroft two events to talk about instead of one,' and I dare say she was qualified to give that opinion at least.

I am now one of the parish matrons. My voice carries weight in the debates upon the lending library and the coal club.

Even in the first year of my new life I found Mrs. Ansted was called upon to do many things which would never have been intrusted to the hands of

HONORA HOLCROFT.

P.S.—I find I have left several points in my narrative not cleared up.

First. I should have explained that Mr. Ansted's words, 'The best match in the country,' merely referred to a horse which Mr. Mills had, which Rupert wished to purchase, as he had one for which it would make 'the best match in the country.'

Secondly. How Laura set herself on fire. This she never knew. Neither did I. Neither can the reader know. Let it be imagined.

Thirdly. Why Rupert did not make his feelings known long before. This also I never knew.

If there are any further points on which my readers wish for information, I shall be happy to afford it, provided they let me know in time for my next notice of Holcroft and its inhabitants.

H. A.

LORD DUNDREARY IN THE COUNTRY.

DIRECTLY the season is over in town, I always go into the countwy. Not, you know, that I like the countwy, but because it is expected of a fellow to go down and see his tenants and shoot partridges when London gets empty—at least what they call empty; not that I ever can see any difference; for the omnibuses, you know, and P-P-Pickford's vans, and the coal-waggons, and Hanthams never go out of town. But what I mean is, when the Wow gets empty, and houses are shut up, and blinds are pulled down, and nobody gives any parties, and there is nobody at the club but old Major Carlton, who, b-b-bullies the waiters, and has the p-p-papers all to himself; and when the Opera's over, and there's no concerts or flower shows for a fellow, and everything's tepid but the soup at the club, and that's cold. But what no fellow can understand is, why the season lasts all the time the countwy is in its pwime, and just as it's getting yellow and seedy like a dowager at the end of the season, then everybody goes into the countwy—it's what I suppose nobody can make out; but they tell me it's because P-P-Parliament's over. So I imagine Parliament doesn't care for the countwy, and does care for partridge shooting. I thuppose 'that's about the thize of it.'

To tell you the twuth, I hate the countwy—it's so awful dull—there's such a howid noise of nothing all day; and there is nothing to see but gween twees, and cows, and buttercups, and wabbits, and all that sort of cattle—I don't mean exactly cattle either, but animals, you know. And then the earwigs get into your hair-bwushes if you leave the bed-woom window open; and if you lie down on the gwass, those howid gwass-hoppers, all legs, play at leap-frog over your nose, which is howide torture, and makes you ready to faint you know, if it is not too far to call for assistance. And the howid sky is always blue, and everything bores you; and they talk about the sun-shine, as if there was more sunshine in the countwy than in the West

End, which is abthurd, you know, only the countwy sun is hotter, and bwings you all out in those howid fweckles, and turns you to a fwifful bwicky colour, which the witches call healthy. As if a healthy man must lose his complexion, and become of a bwicky wed colour—ha! ha!—bwicky—howid—bwicky wed colour—cawotty wed colour!

Then that howid shooting that my keeper dwags me out to on the first of September. My man begins the torture by calling me before day-break, and, half asleep, out I go into the Home Farm—the stubble sharp and hard, like walking over hair-bwushes—turnips with a cup of cold water in every leaf. Then the howid dogs go staring about, and stiffening their tails, and snarling—as the birds wise with a noise like twenty watchmen's wattles spwinging at once, enough to deafen a fellow, and making any one quite nervous. 'Bang! bang!' I go—generewly miss—because the birds don't give one time, you know; and all those keepers and beaters, and fellows loading your gun and cawwyng the game and the luncheon—they disturb your aim, and put a fellow out.

But I know something more howid still, and that's pheasant-shooting among those howid hazle bushes that switch back in a fellow's face, and howid bwambles that tear your coat, and oak boughs that knock your hat off, and the sharp stakes that wun into a fellow's boots; and pweesently in the middle of this up gets a pheasant like a squib going off on the fifth of November, or any other night, and off he goes like a special twain with wings, and so quick that no fellow can get a shot at him.

Then there's wabbit-shooting, that's not so howid, but it's more difficult. 'Forward,' cries the keeper, and in the dogs go, all their tails worming in among the furze at once, as if being nearly torn to pieces was the greatest fun in the world. You stand with your gun cocked waiting in a lane between the furze, ewwy moment afwaid the other fellows will

see you stir, and shoot you in mistake for a wabbit; for the furze is higher than a fellow's hat. All at once you see a wabbit coming stwait towards you, and while you are waiting to see how near he will come, in he goes again into the furze quick as lightning, so that no fellow, you see, can shoot a wabbit.

Then there's thnipe-shooting—howid difficult—might as well go out shooting with pistol-bullets at humble bees—ha! ha!—I say that a good idea—that. Albert Smith, you know, poor fellow! if he had seen alive, which he isn't—he'd have made a good idea out of that. A thnipe doesn't, you know, fly stwait like any wational bird ought to fly, but he dodges like a lawyer—a sort of bawister bird the thnipe is, and it takth several weeks to hit him.

And that weminds me of a good story Talboys—Talboys of Suffolk—told me about a thnipe a friend of his had down in Cambridgeshire. He, Talboys' friend's friend, had a friend (I want to be clear, you know) down to Cambridgeshire to shoot. First day he goes out Talboys' friend's friend fires at a thnipe in a water meadow, and kills him. Upon which Talboys' friend gets vewy wild, and thwearth, and throws down his gun. 'Why,' says he, 'drat it, if you haven't shot the thnipe that has amused me the whole year!' That's not a bad stowy, I think, about that iwational bird, the thnipe.

As for hunting—I don't see the p-p-pull of it—except you want to induce a welation to bweak his neck in order that you may come into his pwoerty. I don't want to bweak my collar-bone or my wibs at 'b-b-bull-finches' and 'waspers'—or dwown myself at water-leaps—or bweak my legs at double fences—and that's what it comes to—and be tumbled upon in ditches by horse-jobbers and farmers, and get up and find your horse thwee miles off, and a monster with a pitchfork pursuing you, as the only one left, for twespassing. Oh, no hunting for me, thank you.

Then the countwy people are sure to p-p-ester you to play a match at cwicket. The Zingawee against the Hodgeshire Eleven—marquees, band,

everything down from London—scorching day, the cwicket ball wed hot, nearly sets the stumps on fire ewery time it stwikes.

Now I like cwicket vewy well if I could get perpetual innings; but I don't like waiting an hour and a half—then going in and getting my stumps knocked over and my shins bwuisued the first ball—it's what no fellow can enjoy.

Besides, when I was a b-b-boy one didn't go to cwicket like a hog in armour, but just as you were. Then you could wun faster, and wern't so hot, and didn't look such b-b-born idiots. Then it is vewy difficult catching a swift ball with an eyeglass—I mean a fellow with an eyeglass on finds it difficult to see the ball, and gets it on his nose instead of in his hands—and then, if you do miss it, all the field calls out 'b-b-butter-fingers,' which is a low thing to say, you know, and makes a fellow look vewy ridiculous.

But there's one thing I do like in the countwy—besides the larks—the little naked chaps you see on a skewer at the poulterers in Bond Street, all among the Epping sausages, singing above your heads—and the smell of hay and clover—I've got this sentence in a jumble that no man can make sense of)—and that's a pic-nic—pigeon-pies and pork-pie hats, girls and lobster-salads, pwetty faces and champagne—and all on the steps of an old castle that Richard the Conqueror bombarded—or in the cloisters of an abbey that Cromwell founded—or confounded, I don't know which—music and womance—wheumatism and poetwy. The girls look so pwetty among the wild wuins, and even the old dowagers gwoe agwecable. Then the music begins, and there's the dance in the moonlight, like Dinowah's shadow dance in Meyerbeer, and then the fellows laugh till the old walls wing again—that's what I call fun for the countwy—and pop go the champagne corks like a perpetual duel all the time; and the quantity dwunk, considewing no lady pwofesses to like champagne, is what no fellow can understand. I think if I ever did p-p-pop the question, I should do it coming home from a p-p-pic-

nic. Why? Why, because a fellow must do it somewhere, and coming home from a pic-nic in the moonlight is a vewy nice time.

Of all countwy amusements I think fishing is after all pewaps the most abominable. It bores a fellow more than any other. You go out in a punt with a large hamper of luncheon, to keep it steady, I suppose, and an old keeper who takes too much beer to make it unsteady again, which is widiculous, you know. Then the keeper takes some howid wiggling wed worms out of a dirty bag of wet moss, and tortures the poor cweatures howibly by putting them on your hook, smiling all the time as if he was doing a mewitowious action—the old wuffian. Then you sit on your chair under an osier bed by the hour together, the bullrushes bobbing while you bob, till you get quite giddy looking at them, and the weeping willows weeping away like anything. Pwesently, after about an hour, just as you are half asleep, and beginning to enjoy it, you see your wed float moving in a most extwaordinawy way, as if it was curtaying. Then suddenly there comes a dwag that nearly pulls you off your chair. 'A bite, sir, a bite,' cwies the old keeper, seizing the opportunity to take another lift at the beer-jug. Then you pull, and out on to the top of your hat flies a gweat monster of a perch, howid cweature, with wed gold fins, stawing eyes, back a wegular fan of pwickles, a wet flabby tail, and gills like the leaves of a wed pincushion. And so it goes on, till you get all wet and dirty; and sometimes an eel dwags your wod away, and the old keeper, by

this time nearly drunk, has to swim after it; and sometimes you miss the stwoke, and catch a willow tree, which no fellow can land. And the only good time is when you put the wod and line down and go to luncheon.

But there is one thing I like, that is, widing. I like to be astwide a horse—if he is not vicious or too fast, and if a fellow can manage him. I like sketching, too; only the twees will get so like cauliflowers, and the gwass like spinach—and the blue sky will wun, and get all over the paper.

Altogether, take my word for it, the countwy ith a mitthtake—it wants impwoving—it is only fit for wed-fathed people, who thell corn. One twee is like another—one wiver can't be distinguished from another till you look at it on a map, and then, of course, any fellow can tell a wiver. Partwidges are much better woasted than on the wing, and people only pwetend to like shooting them. And as for lambs, they're i-i-idiotic little things, without mint-sauce, and there's no mint-sauce in the countwy. It is dwedful solitary in the countwy, when you're alone I mean—of course not with plenty of people. And one can't play billiards alone, and you can't have people in from the plough, you know, to play with a fellow, because it stops work. So if you think old fellow of going in the countwy to get a bwicky wed colour, take my advice—as Lord B-Bacon or somebody said to a fellow who was what they call thpoony (foolish thing to be thpoony) on a girl, and going to marry her—and a capital thing it was to say—ha, ha! —"Don't."



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THE LORD DUNDREARY IN THE COUNTRY.

"TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, THE COUNTRY ITH A MITHAKE—IT WANTH IMPWOVING."

[See p. 308.

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CRICKETANA.

PART III.

THE SCHOOL MATCHES IN GENERAL, AND THE LATE HARROW AND ETON MATCH IN PARTICULAR.

BUT we must not forget the most amusing of all matches, 'the school matches' annually played at Lord's. These *school* matches have been played, as regards Eton and Harrow, with only occasional intermission, since the beginning of the century. Eton played Harrow one match in 1805, when Lord Byron played for Harrow. This was played at Thomas Lord's first ground, where now is Dorset Square. But the matches at Lord's between Winchester and Harrow date from the time that the Messrs. Wordsworth, brothers, were commencing a distinguished career, the one at Winchester the other at Harrow.

But to speak of 'the school matches,' as now understood, at Lord's, though Winchester for nearly thirty years played usually one, and sometimes both schools, we must confine our attention to Eton and Harrow.

Time was when Eton could be sanguine of success. Of late years, they have been pleading that 'the boats' draw all the bone and sinew of the school, and all 'the big fellows' away from the cricket field. The truth is, it was at one time remarked that the Etonians had been 'taking it easy,' and we were sorry to hear that a certain *dilettante*, and indeed a listless and effeminate style, was creeping into Eton, as if manly exercise were too much trouble, and unworthy the ambition of the rising generation. This we much regretted, and would observe, that all who would succeed in the head-work of life must also learn to unbend in play. Sir R. Peel deemed shooting, as the Duke of Wellington deemed hunting, no loss of time. Indeed, a real fondness for such sports will alone avert the untimely fate of a Follett, and that of others we could mention, who failed in body, when almost unequalled in their powers of mind.

Meanwhile certain 'old fellows' of

Harrow, men of the highest distinction for 'coaching' the young ones, have been training the Harrovians. For real knowledge of the game in all its parts, and good generalship, no gentleman would gain more votes as a representative than the Hon. F. Ponsonby; and when we add to his guidance and encouragement that of the Hon. F. Grimston, Mr. Haygarth, Mr. V. Walker, and other old Harrovians, who for years past have been the models and the Mentors of the school, we need not wonder at the superiority of Harrow cricket.

And here we stop to give a hint to all public schools, and to all trainers of School Elevens.

Training has been too much confined to batting. Batting has been taught with as much regard to cut and thrust, to attitude and to position, as even fencing. Old Lillywhite, in training the Wykehamists, went one step further. He said, 'Attend to your bowling, and your batting will almost take care of itself.' Yes, he even went so far as to train a wicket-keeper; but the sphere yet open for improvement is Fielding. The out-play in cricket is far more interesting than the in-play; and, if you calculate running your adversary out by dashing in and quick return; frightening the next man into steady running; and, above all, giving confidence to your bowler, while you save what would be runs—the effect of fine fielding is often half the score. We would advise, therefore, that every man should first practise as long-stop; then that he play the same part under the disadvantages of standing some yards to the right, then to the left; and then practise crossing the ball diagonally, and the same at full speed, and always returning with a good throw. Then each should practise throwing to a wicket-keeper, under every disadvantage of haste and quick return. But, above all, the most dashing play to behold is when a man runs into a

ball, not (as is too common) to stop at the last two yards, but to rush in to the last inch, and then return the ball with all the spring and impetus thus attained. Quick underhand return at short distances should be practised too.

Another point in good cricket is making the runs when batting. This subject is so completely exhausted in the 'Cricket Field' (pp. 214-221), that we can but refer to the pages of that work, which we can claim to quote as being now the standard authority, long since pronounced by the 'Sporting Magazine' to be quite the 'Isaac Walton' or the 'Nimrod' of this field-sport.

However, let us suppose the training done: the wished-for day has come at last, and Eton v. Harrow is the match at Lord's. The newest flannel, the smartest belts, and favourite bat—'No such bat to drive as mine, and under 2 lbs.; light as a feather'—characterizes each of the men—always *men*—who cluster round their respective captains, first of all to superintend the customary toss for first innings. 'Our captain has lost the toss, when it was for him to cry!' said one Etonian. 'Well, that is slow!—and the idea of crying "heads" to a half-crown! Really he ought to have known better.'

'Our side has won the toss: we go in first, of course,' says another. Whereupon proceed to the wickets (as once we saw) one little fellow about as high as the stumps, and one 'big fellow,' overgrown, and rather 'weedy,' but nearly six feet high.

'Where can be the good of that young one?' asks an old Etonian. 'What! little Williams?' is the reply. 'He's the greatest sticker we have. You may as well bowl against a barn-door as his wicket. He goes by the name of the Little Phenomenon. But just look up at the first row of the pavilion: there are two smaller than Williams, the two Waltons. Such smart fields they are—so close to the ground, they have no occasion to stoop, and hop about everywhere quick as "lightning." Our fellows call them the Industrious Fleas.'

Well, this is a glorious day for the boys, if they never see another.

All the world's eyes are upon them; for 'Bell's Life' has a reporter to chronicle their doings, and to publish every run and every wicket all over England by next Saturday night; and that fine old fellow, Lord Knockemoff, is indulging them with an all-important talk of cautions and of dodges 'sure to get them out,' and is just as pleased at every Harrow score as when, before the days of his large corporation, red face, and gouty toes, he carried out his bat for half a hundred runs himself. 'Ah! these were the days for learning cricket. The little fellows fagged for the big fellows at every school, and we were sure to feel the middle stump across our back if we ever missed a catch.'

And now the ground begins to fill. Nearly every man of the two-and-twenty has a mother, and perhaps a sister or two, and not one within distance but must gladden her eyes with her own boy—proud of the honour of his being one of the Eleven to maintain the fame and credit of his school at Lord's. But, unhappily, the game of cricket, like the game of life, has its disappointments, and caution does more than brilliant play. 'The race is by no means "always" to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.'

'Big Rodwell, you know'—as once we overheard at a carriage door—'is our first bat; he goes in next: then you shall see, mother—won't he punish this bowling, that's all. Oh! look there!—that loose ball would have been a certain fiver!—Well, that is a pity—Weston is caught, and Rodwell must soon be in.'

'Here comes Rodwell,' cries the Eton wicket-keeper; 'he ought to do something. His governor drove Lillywhite up to Harrow three days in one month, on purpose to coach him for this match. Now, then—look alive. Long-leg must stand deeper, and be ready for a catch—yes, and long-slip must move more round. He doesn't slip: he cuts, and that pretty hard. So—there is the place for Rodwell's hit.'

Big Rodwell takes guard; all eyes are upon him. Every Etonian longs in his soul he may be the one to catch Big Rodwell out. One ball is stopped

by his partner, and now Atfield has to bowl at Rodwell's wicket. First ball—'A fine cut, Rodwell—run away—no—stop.' The Phenomenon has it and sends it back like a shot. 'Not much change out of that,' whispers short-slip. Second ball is driven hard to middle wicket. Charlie Walton faces it like a man—not quite stopping it, he wheels round like a dog hunting for his tail, and recovers the ball just in time to save the run.

Third ball passes the wicket. 'My eye! what a shaver!' cries little Wilton; 'Atfield never did bowl so well.' Fourth ball's a shooter, and levels his stumps for 'a duck's egg,' (a cipher is so called).

Up goes the ball, and shouts rend the air; during which, with no enviable feelings, the unhappy Rodwell goes back downcast to the pavilion, where everyone asks, 'How was that? How did it happen?' and wishes him better luck to pay them off next innings.

It were long to follow all the fortune of the fray. Suffice it to say, cricket is never so truly played as in a good school match. The little fellows dream of it for a month, polish their bats for a week, and what with preparing pads, belts, and toggery, and figuring imaginary scores upon paper, the least we can allow them is a day. Then they come to the ground wound up to concert-pitch; full of all that joyous energy and superfluity of buoyant spirits with which a kindly Providence thrills the breast, as a store of hope, and health, and happiness, to meet the shocks of later life.

And if the players are never so happy neither are the lookers-on ever so happy either. Fathers and elder brothers and the 'old fellows' (of each school) shout and cheer most vociferously at every hit that is made by the one party, or every 'man out' by the other; and as to 'a near thing' in one of these matches, as once we saw, never did we witness such excitement before. We cannot forget how one honourable gentleman, an old Harrovian, before the days of tin telegraphic figures which now keep going up and up with the barometer of the

hopes and spirits of excited thousands, hurried backwards and forwards from the pavilion to the scoring-table in a state of restless and rampant anxiety. You would have thought the fate of kingdoms hung tottering in the balance committed by some freak of fortune to the fingers' ends of eleven boys. Yes: and we once remember the lucky bowler chased round the ground, too modest to be chaired, by the enthusiasm of victorious Eton—a compliment this year repeated to the honour of Mr. Maitland, who almost retrieved the fortunes of Harrow, and Mr. Teape, who did the lion's share for Eton.

We alluded to the part dame Fortune plays in cricket. Considering the wide sphere for skill in the game of cricket, it is remarkable how much it is also a game of chance. When Mr. Ward made the longest recorded score of 278 he was missed an easy catch at the point of 30! Few matches are played without the losing side missing as many chances—all within the powers of the same men on lucky days—as would have turned the scale in their favour. Sometimes the sun blinds a man at a critical moment; or, the wind gives a bias to the ball, or the rain—as twice with the Gentlemen and Players' match in one year—makes the ground bumpy for one party after being true and even for the other. The long shadows of evening are also puzzling. One afternoon in an All England match, we saw our crafty friend James Dean pitching the ball exactly at the shadow of Carpenter's head, a dark and moving spot upon the ground. But the most vexatious thing is for a player to see a full-bodied amateur with lots of many-coloured broadcloth standing just in the sight of the ball, and moving as the ball comes. Why, it is enough to blind a man.

There are many other points for fortune's favours. Many a skying ball falls where the enemy is not. Many a ball meriting a wicket works aside. Many a man receives only as the fiftieth ball and after a score of thirty, the ball that might have stopped him with no score at all.

Very much depends on the ground;

a grassy ground favours a twist, a hard and lively ground favours slow bowling; then some ground if not quite level would render swift bowlers, like Mr. Fellowes or Jackson, almost impossible to face. However, the effect of chance is chiefly negative. It sends back a Parr or a Caffyn without a score; but it is not on record that any man but a good player ever made a long score against a good Eleven.

That cricket baffles all calculation appears remarkable from the following case:—

In 1841, Harrow beat Winchester in one innings: next day, Winchester beat Eton by nearly as much; of course, *à fortiori*, Harrow should beat Eton; but actually Eton beat Harrow, and that in a more hollow match than either, for they won in one innings and 175 runs! Mr. Bayley, the Eton captain, who had done nothing against Winchester, scored 152, the largest school score ever made at Lord's, though Mr. Airey, of Marlborough College, in the year 1859 made a better innings, scoring 162 against Grundy and Brampton, the two professional bowlers with the M. C. C. Eleven.

Nothing corroborates this view of luck like a book of scores. There you see an All England Eleven out as at Hungerford for a run a piece. The eleven B's with Budd and Beld-bean were out for nine; and at Lord Winterton's park in 1856 eleven men were out with no score at all! though capable of scoring 100 next innings. In the Players' Match of one year, Parr on the one side and Caffyn on the other added but little to the score, though Caffyn has scored 120 with 16 good men in the field, and Parr scored 130 a week later on the Surrey ground.

Perhaps there has rarely been more excitement than about the Eton and Harrow match played this year. Last year's match had been left unfinished, just in that interesting state in which it is called 'anybody's game.' The partisans of each side had a reason to give why, had there only been one hour more, they must undoubtedly have won. The one party declared, 'Our fellows

were well in, and the bowling knocked off—indeed, regularly "collared." The other party replied, 'That's all very well; but we had made the runs, and you had yet to get them. A stern chase is always a long one: the side that's *in* is too nervous and too shaky to hit, while the side that's *out* does all the better; and you, my friends, had more than an average score to make with only the tail of your Eleven.'

This being the feeling with which the last match was broken off, 'Time' being called, no wonder that every mother's son, ay, and every mother and sister too, with all the household, from the coachman with colours on his whip and horses' heads down to the very team-boys, who skulked off to see Master John or Mr. William play—no wonder they greeted the day when the same struggle was to begin again. The ladies were excited beyond all description. In good truth, they had known one of those days that redeem a whole year of insipidity, and take more than ten years to forget. One lady we called on a week after last year's match, and the effervescence of the day had not one whit subsided. It was wonderful how much she knew about the game. So apt a scholar, and so learned was this lady fair in all the chances of the game, and, not least, the wondrous difference that the lively ground 'made to one side' (Eton), and her eyes sparkled, and quite a covey of caged emotions seemed to have taken wing, and to be fluttering in her breast, as she impressed upon me all the reasons how and why 'our side must have won' had they only fought it fairly out. Nothing, therefore, could take precedence, not only as a fashionable but as a most spirit-stirring reunion of the great school match at Lord's.

Arrived on the ground, the gathering we perceived at a glance was indeed a sight to see. Three or four lines of carriages, as at Ascot, were ranged all round the field, so wedged and locked together that certain friends of ours had to leave their coachman to await his turn and come home in the dusk of the evening, and themselves but too

happy to escape on foot. As to the 'ring'—the six or seven thousand of sixpenny spectators—they only found room for themselves and a vent for their enthusiasm by encroaching on the ground yards beyond the scorer's seat, where Lillywhite, driven from his reporter's box and printing-office, was too glad to beg accommodation too.

The game was full of interest to the last. The Etonians headed in the first innings, but by no such number as one lucky score might not easily rub off: still, in their second innings they cut out work enough for their adversaries to do. However, though all went swimmingly for Eton just at first, a time there was when no friend of Eton felt safe or sure that Harrow would not win. The Eton bowling was the stronger, it is true; still no young bowler can ever last when once met by an obstinate and a steady resistance.

'While Maitland was hitting, and fast running up his score of seventy and more—it is still a lady who is speaking—and while Grimston was like a fixture, so wary and steady as to be provoking quite, the letters of the telegraph kept running up—with an agonizing cheer all round the ground for Harrow at each new figure that appeared, I felt at length almost fevered with excitement too great to last, when all of a sudden I heard one deafening shout, and Maitland, amidst vociferous cheering from the Pavilion, walked away, the last hope of the Harrovians gone, both caught and bowled by the Etonian bowler, Mr. Teape.'

As to our company, there was scarcely a noble family in England that had not a representative at Lord's on that exciting day.

And was this the public feeling and so great the interest that a head master of Eton once ventured to set at naught? Yes. For one season 'the powers that be' at Eton uttered an interdict against the annual match. No doubt there either was, or seemed to be, a reason. Some said that Etonians from Oxford or Cambridge had been known on the evenings of the match to initiate the

boys into 'life in London.' Some said, more probable by far, that the two Elevens vied with each other in the feats of sumptuous hospitality at some first-rate West-end hotel. It was therefore proposed that a friendly game might be played at Eton, as answering the same purpose as the annual match at Lord's. But little did that sage suggestor know of all the many hopes and hearts that hung upon the rivalry of the one great day at Lord's, when each rising cricketer made his *début* before the first cognoscenti and judges of the land, calmly speculating on the help that the Oxford or the Cambridge Eleven, and perhaps the M. C. C., when college days were past, would derive from this or that most promising young player. Little, too, did the recusant preceptor know what disappointment he would cause with old as well as young; how that day at Lord's was like a Panhellenic festival and games of old; a general gathering for all who owned Etona as the common spring of many a genial feeling, the nurse of many a noble sentiment. Still less did he reflect how that day at Lord's even old and tottering veterans in heart at least are playing too—each jogs the other's memory of such a catch or such a wicket that saved the game in the good days of old: how, *mente animoque*, 'they fight all their battles o'er again,' and cannot pick up a stray ball but they send it back with a knowing jerk, not too wise to be ambitious of showing the boys that time was when they could do a little too.

At length, however, a strong representation prevailed at head quarters, and the great disturber of the peace of hundreds was led to perceive that other measures were due to the 'old boys' if not the young; and the annual contest was re-established, while the hearts of thousands beat in sympathy, and perhaps glowed with some not yet extinguished sparks of that youthful ardour which once had marked themselves first and foremost, years gone by, on that very identical hard-fought field.

FLORAL NOTES AND NOVELTIES.

'The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow,
But on the hill the golden rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.'

BRYANT.

I INTEND to make of this a thoroughly practical indoor gardening paper; for I think that the time when people care most of all for having flowers in-doors is just when the want of them begins to be felt without.

For my own part, at least, I must confess that from October to Easter I have three times as many flowers as in all the other months of the year together. One has so much pride in each new bud that opens, and a winter's drawing-room full of the scent of flowers is ten times the pleasanter from the contrast that it makes to the chilly gloom that reigns over all without.

But if we intend to shine in the autumn and winter months on the strength of our indoor gardens, we must not forget to prepare for them in due time. It is not yet generally known by lady gardeners how extremely easily flowers are to be had in winter. My first initiation into the mysteries of forcing without frames, as well as into the exquisite beauty of the cheapest and commonest flowers when well arranged, was in the tiny drawing-room some years ago inhabited by a friend of mine who had spent half her life abroad. It was to me quite marvellous how redolent of fresh flowers that sunny room always was, without even involving more expense than now and then a few shillings. There was a sort of atmosphere that seemed the perfection of summer fragrance, and that gave to the little room a most bright and delicate charm.

Many a day I admired—and not a little I envied—such a display of flowers, but how they were obtained was to me quite a mystery. Some Lilies of the valley, some dishes of spring flowers, and some deliciously-scented Tulips made me, however, resolve some day to do as much; and

I must now assure those who may determine to try any of these experiments that I shall record here nothing that I have not done successfully without any facilities further than I mention.

Would not anybody and everybody like to have in winter hanging baskets filled with radiant flowers, and table ornaments of living and growing beauty?

Delicious as Hyacinths are with their stately columns of closely-gathered flowers, and with their sweet perfume, there is something somewhat stiff in them as they stand in their formal lines, growing in tall glasses which add to their height and narrowness.

The charm of charm for Hyacinths is when they form a pyramid or group, leaving the stiff appearance, and condescending at last to borrow the grace of the bending flowers, the lovely little sprays of lightly-hung flower bells, the drooping heads of the 'pearls of spring,' and the little dazzling Bluebells mingling with their beauty.

I have certainly tried a great many ways of cultivating spring flowers, and of all these ways I am sure that the most successful plan is the very simple one which I am about to describe.

Some years ago a London seedsman announced in his 'bulb list' some three or four varieties of 'miniature Hyacinths,' which afterwards were offered to children's notice specially, with wonderful names attached, merely as a sort of toy. Happening to have some of these flowers sent me amongst cut flowers, they struck me as affording a most precious means of furnishing winter nosegays, and the next year, for an experiment, I planted a few in soup plates.

My astonishment at the result

was only equalled by my delight. The lovely white and rose flowers grew up in most perfect symmetry and beauty: I thought that probably they would have been tall and thin. All sorts of unkind things, I have been told, were said by some of the gardeners, and by country seedsmen who had never apparently seen them, of these 'small refuse bulbs.' But certainly, for my own part, I was most happily assured that where *small* but perfect flowers were wanted, these might claim very fairly to be real gems in miniature. These lovely little Hyacinths grow from four to six inches high. They are extremely cheap, being sold by the dozen, and some kinds very often put up more than one flower stem each. There is particularly a kind called the White Roman Hyacinth, which is said to be even more abundant than others in its flowering. This kind, however, has not yet been grown by me, so I only mention it as one that I am planting, and think very promising. Its bulbs are to be obtained earlier than the other kinds, and it is therefore likely to be sooner in flower.

There are four kinds besides this which I plant each year regularly, as soon as they are procurable. These include only a darkish-striped red, a pale pretty pink, a beautiful reflexed white, and another pure, bell-shaped white. The names of these Hyacinths seem to me extremely arbitrary; but at the shop I mentioned (Hooper's in Covent Garden), these are all well known, and can be got in groups for planting, like those which I buy each year, and have proved to answer.

There are also one or two very pretty blue kinds; and other seedsmen have a few more varieties, though, with the exception of some of an exquisite pale rose colour, sold at a shop in King Street, Covent Garden, I have not seen any that improve on these.

My favourite way of growing them is in large china dishes—a sort of old-fashioned cake basket is one of the prettiest generally, with a group of about five Hyacinths clustered in the centre, and with the beautiful sky-blue Scillas peeping up

amongst them, in their turn surrounded by the exquisite little Snowdrops. The Scillas begin extremely early to show dots of their bright, clear colour peeping through the green, closely-folded leaves. And this is a charm which is ever recommencing; for as each fragile stalk with its pale flowers fades, it needs but to be carefully cut off and a new set of flower buds immediately rise to replace it.

The Scillas, according to my experience of the last several winters, will begin to be pretty objects early in December, and will continue flowering with undiminished energy till long after all their compeers have faded away entirely. They will even bear transplanting frequently to new places. The price of these is extremely moderate; about eight pence a dozen. Another delightful winter flower is the red Van Thol Tulip. Its most delicate and peculiar fragrance is perhaps the more delightful because we don't, as a rule, expect such a scent in Tulips. These little low flowers, nestling in a thick bed of moss, look marvellously lovely, gleaming out like gems; and there is a great charm in their constant changefulness as they open and close again with the varying warmth and sunlight. One of the prettiest adaptations of these little flowers is seen when they are placed amongst white and purple Crocuses. The cup-shaped flowers suit very well together; and if well arranged, some Tulips being placed in the very centre, and two or three again dropped carelessly round the sides, the bouquet that is formed by them becomes very pretty. The pink and white Van Thol is a still more delicate flower. It looks like a dainty lady arrayed in white and rose—its graceful shining petals have such a slender form, and the exquisite cup is tinged with such a transparent colour. These lovely flowers, however, have not any scent.

The very gayest and most valuable flowers of the Tulip tribe for all decorative purposes are perhaps the beautiful Rex and Imperator Rubrorum. They have certainly a

glowing depth of lively, fiery red that lights up any tameness with the most brilliant colour. Looking at these flowers amongst a group of tamer ones, I always am reminded of the vermillion seal 'fired off' by Turner on the Academy walls.

The bulbs that I have mentioned are to be grown with perfect ease. A first essay in their culture ought to be as successful as a fourth or fifth. The details as to growing them, in their most extreme minuteness, I now proceed to mention.

First as regards the time of planting. It is in all cases well to have the roots planted as early as can be arranged. Even supposing that they were kept purposely quite dry, it would be better to have them kept in sand rather than in mere bags. Some things, too, such as tulips, are exceedingly uncertain. I have known one in a dozen, perhaps, begin to grow well, while all the others gave not a sign of rootling. It is thus, of course, a great object to put *all* we have in temporarily together, so that in arranging particular groups we may select those bulbs especially whose roots have begun to grow. Once started, their growth is generally pretty even.

The bulbs, when first obtained, should be arranged in groups; or, in the case of Tulips, if preferred, in mere lots, like a miniature root nursery. The Hyacinths and Snow-drops as well as the Crocuses ought not, as a rule, to be transplanted purposely. Should it become requisite, any one of them will submit to it; but they certainly do far best when they grow from the first in their own proper groups — four or five Hyacinths, surrounded and mixed with Scillas and fringed with a mixed border of Snowdrops and of Scillas. The bulbs may be set as close as they will pack together; but a little more space is certainly an advantage. In a 12-inch glass

There is also a sort of imitation rustic work that is really very pretty, and particularly suitable for the growth of this kind of things. The large fern pans, for instance, of a rough woody-looking material, and the hanging baskets of interlaced pine branches are extremely nice for this purpose, and reasonable in price. There is also a flower-pot of the same description (of the Staffordshire ware), sold at the same place as the bulbs that would be charming for a Cyclamen, or for a group of Hyacinths. It has an arrangement like a false floor for draining, and is an unobjectionable imitation of a piece of the root of a tree. In potting things in these kinds of pots or pans, a deep layer of well-washed bits of charcoal may be given, and covered with moss, before the mould or sand is added. The wide, shallow fern-pans are perhaps of all things the best for bulb growing. But all things of glass and china have also a great deal of handiness, as they are all ready when we are in any difficulty. Last winter, for instance, I had the most beautiful pie-dish possible! Some Snowdrops were started in one, and when we came to move them they had grown so fixed that we could not meddle with them, and a very lovely knot they made of little fair white bells hanging on their green stalks. We filled up the dish with moss, and it was quite a gem, set in a wreath of green.

The Snowdrops thrive best in plain pure silver sand, kept a little moist, and always close to the light after they once have rooted. The bulbs of these may, or may not, be covered.

The Hyacinths and Scillas, as a rule, do best slightly covered, the lower part of the bulb embedded, perhaps, half an inch, and when they have fairly rooted we may fill up as much as suits us, so as to form a bed on which green living moss may grow.

The degree of moisture required varies with the plants' growth. For the first week or two the very slightest damp in the sand on which the roots just stand suffices; after

this the sand should be kept moist, and when the flowers appear it should be always soaked.

I never knew any flowers less liable to failure than these are when thus managed. Amongst many dozen dishfuls I do not recollect having ever a single disappointment. Of course some one root may fail and have to be thrown away, but the dishes go on and look as gay without it.

These things should be always kept perfectly in the dark for three weeks or more, till they seem rooted thoroughly, and then they may be placed in windows as near to the glass as possible. If by any chance frost should get in to them, it must be well remembered to thaw them by cold water, or by placing them immediately in a cool north aspect, because if the morning sun shines on them before they have been thawed, the effect is always as if they had been singed.

The taller Hyacinths sometimes are troublesome as to height, but these smaller kinds have never given me any trouble; and the pretty Scillas amongst them make the plates really interesting from the very first week or two after they are brought into the window.

Soup plates, milk pans, saucers, china hanging-baskets lined with tin, and large trays fitting windows, everything and anything seems to be impresible; only in all these things it will be found essential that the top of the bulbs should be rather above the edge.

Crocuses are perhaps the most difficult bulbs to grow; people always complain of their growing up so long. This can be attributed only to want of light, or to killing with kindness and giving too much heat. The perfectly pure white Crocuses, with the large purple kind, and the pretty little early Scottish sort, are about the nicest; and when these are mixed with crimson Tulips, the saucers and the soup plates which contain them look really beautiful. The Tulips may be started in their own separate pans, and then be grouped with Crocuses, for flowering, which will bring them out together. These things require much shorter

time in the dark; and when once they are well rooted should be brought to the light and kept thoroughly well watered. It is rather a triumph to grow these quite successfully; though really it is not difficult, and they are very pretty and last a long time out.

Dishes and baskets filled with green moss and planted with red tulips are again delightful both in scent and appearance. It is not a bad plan to have wicker baskets varnished with brown varnish in which a succession of spring flowers may hang all the winter. A charming fashion is a largeish basket with a good-sized Evergreen or Fern for the centre plant, grouped all round with the gay flowers just named. A pot sunk in the midst of a large tin tray produces this effect, or a ring of zinc full of little flowers is very often used and put into the basket over the central plant, which it then enwreaths, while moss is added to fill up any vacant space. Even before the bulbs are out, these baskets may look pretty.

We can always find some pretty Fern to place in them, and Campanulas and wild Bindweeds, Primroses or Cyclamens, mix charmingly with their leaves. Drooping plants, besides, of *Lobelia speciosa* are perfect little gems for autumn fern-filled baskets; and these may be mingled beautifully with the long pink streamers, and the *Sedum Sieboldie*, which grows, and grows, and grows, till we are disposed to laugh at its persevering and spreading vigour. I have thrown away broken leaves and been absolutely provoked to find a short time after, that they had formed into new plants to pot!

The moss which perhaps does best for surrounding this sort of thing is the pretty and easily-grown *Lycopodium denticulatum*, or some of the English *Hypnum*s. These root about very well in the sand or dry moss or fibre contained in hanging baskets, or in the moist sand which fills dishes, and plates, and saucers.

The moss requires only to be planted here and there on the surface as soon as the baskets and

dishes are brought into the light; and the moisture which is maintained for the plants and bulbs is also suitable to its growth.

The beautiful little *Cyclamen Persicum* is another of winter's ornaments, which few of the summer flowers can surpass in gracefulness: its waxen petals, stained with a purple spot, seem hovering like insects over the dark-green leaves. A basket of moss and *Cyclamens* is quite a fairy ornament. These little flowers, too, blossom for months together. I had one last year in beauty from the first of November till April; and all the care that it required was a daily watering with slightly tepid water in a light, airy place.

The roots of these plants should not be covered with earth, but laid on the top of a well-drained pot of soil, a quantity of finely broken potsherds being put in first, covered with dry moss and then filled up with mould. The root, pressed gently on the top, should then be slightly ridged round with a little soil, and the pots should afterwards be kept in a cool light place. Lilies of the valley, too—those exquisite little scented 'Lilies of the May,' as Norwegian peasants call them—are amongst the most easy flowers to grow, and on which to practise forcing: and where is the lady gardener who will not be enchanted when success appears in the form of pearly bells, and of a perfect bouquet that has grown ready made?

I don't know why it is, but I never yet have seen a perfectly satisfactory arrangement of Lilies or of Snowdrops mixed with other flowers. They are each so very perfect in their own white gracefulness, that even blue flowers mixed with them seem to be quite intrusive. A pot full of the Lilies, however, has from ten to fourteen blossoms, and the wide-folded leaves are pleasant themselves as flowers. The last two or three winters I have regularly forced these Lilies. In doing this, a great deal depends on due preparation, securing early potting and plump well-chosen roots. Those bought in November or December may at once be put into a place to

prepare for forcing. I have myself a sort of heated plant-case, with half of the plant-box lined with a zinc hot-water case. My harder plants, or those first brought in for forcing, are placed at the end not heated; but in about a week I advance the pots of Lilies to the warmest corner, and begin to water regularly. It is about five weeks from the time they first come in before they are in blossom. As soon as they are out enough to look pretty, I replace the pot at the cooler end that the flowers may last the longer; and it is absolutely weeks before they begin to fade, while the beautiful leaves continue long after the flowers are gone. Each flower should be cut off as it begins to fade, and the leaves should ultimately be allowed to die off gradually in some retired corner. The same pots will flower year after year with increasing strength, though I hardly know if it would be safe to force them frequently. If the soil is refreshed by the addition of leaf mould, in which these wood plants delight, I think they would, however, generally, be strong enough to bear it; and in this case would get a habit, as vines do, of budding early, changing their natural season for flowering. In most things of this kind, the great aim in gardening is to find out the idiosyncrasy of each particular plant by experiments as to the sort of line that suits each. It is only by thus trying, that people can acquire the sort of personal knowledge that makes the care of plants so interesting an occupation. Genius is not required—one absolutely blunders on to the right path. All that one need have is sense to see the particular peg on which a success has hung itself—and to make a note of the fact for future guidance!

The appliances for all these things are as common and cheap as possible, and such as are attainable in any part of England without the slightest difficulty. I hear of such dishes being grown successfully from Newcastle to Torquay; and though it may be difficult to get things at country shops, all the bulbs I mention can be sent down

straight from London without the slightest injury — while crockery plates and milk pans, a few wicker baskets and a little moss are scarcely hard to meet with in the most rural district.

The results are so completely and pleasingly out of all proportion to the little trouble that is required — a few common flowers seem to have no right to look so distinguished — though it is quite astonishing what careful attendance does for them, and how fair and delicate the sheltered flowers appear in comparison with their sisters, exposed to the storms of winter.

As these papers profess to be on *Floral Novelties* (though this one hitherto has *not* precisely been so), I should certainly fail in my duty terribly if I did not mention a flower not yet attainable, but which some favoured few may have penetrated the crowd to view, at the summer flower shows, and which more will, I hope, have a chance of seeing next month, as doubtless Mr. Veitch will send his magnificent lily, if it be still in blossom, to the final show. The *Lilium auratum* is the grand new flower of the day. It is an immense, pale, orb-like flower, so very luminous that light seems almost to beam from it. The pale rays of bright gold that shine through every petal form an actual star, softened by the clear white petals which form a shining halo round it. One cannot look on the flower without remembering Longfellow's expression as to the stars being the forget-me-nots of the angels, and wondering if such flowers are on their part the stars of earth. These flowers will be, we may hope, some day as common in our gardens as the old great white Lilies. Like the Peonies and Wistarias, and the common China roses, they will multiply and spread on till even our cottage gardens will one day possess them. It is very pleasant to see, when a new flower is found, the great delight that all thorough-going florists feel, if it is a hardy one, and likely to become common. It seems to be then brought forward with absolute exultation, as if its finders felt the pleasure that it will afford to such succeeding thou-

sands, of those who will grow it, and delight in its glorious blossoms. I don't often use the word glorious in writing of a flower; but this is one that permits, and even demands, an exception. To me it seems the most beautiful Lily that I ever saw; and it has, besides, all the fragrance that, were it insignificant, would make its claim to being cherished. The plants are as hardy as the common Japan lilies; and the flowers have measured already eight inches across. It is not too much to say that these 'golden lilies' do truly 'shine in beauty.'

The only other well-established novelty of which I have for some time been lying in wait to write the moment it was in good train for becoming popular, is the heated plant-case, which has for some months attracted a good deal of interest at the London flower shows, and which greatly tends to enlarge the idea of what flowers will do indoors even in a London atmosphere.

These cases may certainly claim very justly to make the work of gardening easy; and during the winters that I have had them in use they have been almost always very gay with flowers. The peculiar arrangement for warming these cases obviates all the difficulties which fern-growers know so well, as to the damping off and mildewing of the plants; and from the ease with which they are at once heated (by filling a small reservoir with hot water daily), they enable us to grow quantities of stove plants in drawing-rooms, as well as to force the hardier flowers readily, a work that is certainly of the very pleasantest.

The warmth required for the more tender plants and for forcing does not hinder the growth and duration of hardier plants as well. The forcing and heating are managed entirely at the roots, and one end of each case is purposely left unwarmed. In this part I have had the same white *Camellia* perfectly unspotted for more than five weeks together, while at the other end the tenderest stove plants flourished.

There is a great and especial charm, too, in the peculiar bloom

and sparkle that the flowers retain; the sheltered atmosphere and the frequent dew-bath causing them to wear often for days and weeks that sort of dewy bloom which generally we see on them only when just unfolding; and yet by merely opening one side of the case we can throw into our rooms all the delicious scent of the still sheltered and still protected plants. It is in these cases that I force my Lilies, and in them it is that I boast of winter roses. The general idea is strong, that only foliage plants thrive well in such confinement; but this is to me a mystery, as I quite believe the flowering plants when tried, to be the most easily grown.* The cases are made to fill different sized windows; the general principle being, of course, observed in all. And when they are filled with creepers twining naturally and gracefully with their own inimitable twistings, and bends, and wreaths, and with some spreading foliage waving in the centre, with sufficient shade in the way of dark-green foliage (not to shade the plants, but to cause light and shade in grouping), while gay and blooming flowers are making an undergrowth or bending amidst the leaves, the beauty of such a group is difficult to exaggerate. I do not know how it is, but perhaps the large glass cases give an idea of completeness to the little group in itself, beyond what is felt when in a large conservatory we see things in detail instead of in one group.

The plant-case, however, with its contents, is a group, and, as such, can benefit by good taste in grouping, and by the power the arranger has of bringing the strong points forward. At the same time it is still so small a group that each separate item is valuable.

The small-leaved Passion-flower, *Cissus*, *Gardenia*, *Lobelia*, *Camelia*, *Myrtle*, *Verbena*, *Azalia*, *Gloxinia*, *Achimenes*, Lilies of all kinds—Ferns, mosses, are amongst the things that thrive here delightfully—the 'beau-

* These patent plant-cases can, I believe, always now be seen, filled with suitable plants, at Mr. Veitch's Nursery in King's Road, S.W.

tiful leaved' *Maranta* is a good centre-piece, and the red *Dracena*, grown in such a case, is always ready to appear on the dinner-table in its most brilliant colouring. Several persons as well as myself have also had beautiful plants of Orchids for many months together growing well in these cases, and keeping in flower long. Little hanging baskets are also managed beautifully. The dewy atmosphere prevents the drying up, which is their great failing when hung in too airy windows, and these little rafts of flowers look wonderfully pretty.

The way of fastening four or five sticks together, which on a larger scale is practised much for Orchids, is a very taking one for such little plants. The sticks are merely wired together into a rough frame (being fastened with copper wire because it does not rust) and then they support a small ball of moss containing a little soil or a handful of cocoa fibre in which little creepers root well.

The small blue *Campanula*, and the blue *Lobelia*, are perfect plants for such a place, and the *Torreya Asiatica* also, and some small *Achimenes* are very lovely things to use in such a manner, while they can be prevailed upon to keep up successions almost all through the year. Little Ferns, too, are beautiful to creep about such rafts, and the flowers amongst them look exquisitely graceful, while I have sometimes seen delicate climbers knit to them, and form with them little knots, like a group of jewels set in a chain of filigree.

Such are a few of the many devices for growing winter flowers. The flowers themselves are indeed delightful; but there is room to question if the simple act of growing them and watching them is not a greater pleasure even than the gathering them. Indeed, to a genuine window gardener to gather any flower is not an easy task; and thus all unconsciously one comes to cling to modes of growth like these, that form ungathered nosegays, and to flowers that wreath themselves, while growing, into new forms.

SEA-BATHING.



A VIEW ON THE COAST. (Drawn by J. D. Watson.)

THIS is the queen of months for the sea-bather. The earlier, and perhaps brighter months of the year may seem more attractive, and sorry should I indeed be to cast the slightest imputation upon any part of the year as being unfit for sea-bathing; but in September and October the water has attained a soft warmth that gives to those two months a character peculiarly their own, and which endures, with but very slight deterioration, until the end of November, or, if the skies should be snowless, even into dark December itself. The summer's sun has poured its genial beams on the rocks and sands of the shore, and each returning tide has washed over the heated beach, carrying back into the wide waters the warmth that had so lavishly

saturated the shores; so that a belt of warm water, wider than is traversed by ordinary bathers, encircles the coast, and invites the wearied denizens of crowded cities to its tender embrace.

I say, advisedly, the denizens of cities, because the permanent inhabitants of sea-side towns imbibe contempt of the ocean in proportion to their familiarity with it, never seem to bathe, and always prefer to walk for recreation away from the sea rather than on its sounding shores. Was it not this very summer that, on interrogating the plentiful family of a distinguished bath-owner, I elicited the fact that only one of their number had ever tried a bath in salt water, and that the experience of even the solitary exception was re-

stricted to a marble trough of artificially warmed salt water inside a little room? Paterfamilias, though descanting many hundreds of times daily on the manifold virtues of sea-bathing, and by the fascinating eloquence of his style inducing the casual crowd to be trundled into the spray in the oblong boxes called 'machines,' candidly confessed to me that he *used* to bathe when he was a boy. Materfamilias never had ventured to test practically the virtue of the element which she verbally extolled, and not even the boys had attempted a single stroke in the salt waves.

Even as these lines are passing through the printer's hands, the wiser visitors are gathered around the coast, hovering upon the edge of the ocean, and intending to take the proper advantage of its good qualities. Being of a somewhat amphibious nature, and having apparently descended from Nicola Pesci, or the Seal-wife of the fairy tale, I have been greatly consulted about the proper management of bathing, both in fresh and sea water, and take the present opportunity of committing to paper some of the hints that have been verbally given throughout many successive seasons.

What is the proper time of year for sea-bathing?

All the year round, for those who will venture upon the apparently rash but really simple and agreeable exploit. No one need be afraid of the cold water, however frosty the day may be, for the water is ever warmer than the air, and the really chilly part of the proceeding is during dressing. Still the bath in the open air is a much pleasanter and less freezing operation than the 'tubbing' in a dressing-room, for the walk to the sea and the quick swim in the water have made the blood circulate through the frame, and the cold is thrown off the body like water from a duck's back. The coldest time of the year, as far as the water is concerned, is about April, when the sea has beaten for a series of months on frozen shores, and has not as yet been able to absorb any heat from the sunbeams. But no matter what may be the time of year, be it fine

or be it rainy, there is nothing to compare with the open sea bath, nothing which sends so warm a glow through the frame in winter, nothing that so effectually braces the flagging nerves in summer.

What is the proper time for bathing?

Assuredly in the early morning before breakfast, and late in the evening. And let no one fancy that a bath at both these times will be weakening. Properly taken, a dip in the sea has a strengthening effect, and it is only the abuse of the water that causes the languid feeling so frequently complained of after bathing. To all readers of the male sex let me give the following advice, strengthened by the practice of many years, and let me casually mention that the writer is by no means one of those enviable beings with constitutions of steel and an epidermis tough as a rhinoceros's hide, who are never ailing themselves and never can be made to understand that every one is not so robust as themselves.

In the first place, eschew machines, rightly so called, as they reduce sea-bathing to the merest mechanical process of getting into the water and out again, with a host of cares on your mind.

You are always afraid of getting into the wrong machine, and as you swim out to sea, you must be continually looking back to note the various changes in the position of those vehicles, for though your own particular wheeled packing-case may have been the fourth in order when you left it, a few changes will reduce it to second or raise it to sixth. As you splash about in the water you cannot keep from your mind the unpleasant consciousness that some intending bather is watching your machine with hungry eye and grudging you every minute of your swim. Then, as you return, unless your sense of self-reliance be greatly developed, it is barely agreeable to know that you are approaching a sea-shore crowded with spectators of both sexes, and as you get gradually into shallow water, your efforts to keep yourself modestly hidden under the surface are sadly provocative of excoriations on knees

and elbows; while, if your contour has lost the Apollo-like elegance of its youth and is tending towards the maturer outlines of Silenus, you cannot avoid the humiliating consciousness that all your efforts are in vain, and that though perhaps not witty in yourself, you are certainly the cause of wit in others. Lastly, when you get up those flapping steps, which always seem as if they were intended for the purpose of removing the bather's cuticle just as he raises his foot for the ascent, what a wretchedly depressing and comfortless cell the machine proves itself to be! It is full of hard edges and sharp angles, so small that when you try to use the two flimsy pocket-handkerchiefs euphemistically called towels, you knock your elbows against the side, and so rickety that it lurches wildly as each wave strikes the side, sending the inmate staggering from one side to the other, and generally bringing him up suddenly with his head against a hat-peg or his nose through the remarkable article of furniture hung on a nail, and supposed by sanguine persons to represent a looking-glass.

En passant, I believe that these nine-by-six-inch glasses are made expressly for bathing-machines, never having seen them in any other capacity, not even in brokers' shops. A bather, with a reasonable knowledge of drawing, might make an interesting series of portraits of himself as he appears in the machine mirrors. They all possess the property of distorting the image reflected in them, and have the further peculiarity that no two are precisely alike. One of them will widen the countenance till the face is as flat as a Norfolk biffin; another elongating it until it resembles the bowl of a teaspoon; another will draw all the features diagonally into a corner; while another will impart to the countenance a semi-lunar outline, the gibbosity of which is directed upwards or downwards, sideways or diagonally, according to the idiosyncrasy of the particular glass. And even in those rare instances where the glass is tolerably even, and presents the features in their proper relationship with each other, large patches of the silverying are always absent, and considerable ac-

tivity is needful in shifting the face rapidly so as to get a connected idea of its general aspect.

So, abjure machines with all their belongings, have nothing to do with towels a foot square, wet and slippery boards, obnoxious hat-pegs and hypocritical mirrors, but take good advice and bathe freely in the open air.

Turn out of bed by six A.M., put on your worst suit of clothes, and with a good rough towel in one pocket, a comb in another, and without either watch or money, neither of which you will want, start off in the bright, fresh morning air. Do not go to bathe fasting, as some persons wrongly recommend, but drink a cup of milk, and, if you like, eat with it half a captain's biscuit. Without this precaution the system is apt to be chilled by the water, and the brisk glow of reaction does not take place, thereby undoing all the benefit of the bath. Some persons recommend a teaspoonful of rum or brandy in the milk, but I think the addition to be quite needless.

Being thus primed, set off at a brisk walk for some pleasant and retired spot, at least a mile away, and if at a distance of two miles so much the better. We will suppose that the intending bather has already surveyed the locality at low water, and knows that no sunken rock will be in his way, and that he can steer his course safely by certain marks on the shore. Let him run a few hundred yards to his dressing-place at his best speed, off with his clothes, putting the towel on the top of all, and then dash into the water at full run. As soon as the waves reach to his knees, he should fall forward, let the water cover him completely, pick himself up again, and push his way out to sea until he has gained a depth of some three feet, when it will be better to swim, if he is experienced in the art, if not he should not go deeper than the breast. Granting the natatory power, let him take a good sharp swim, well within his strength, kick and splash about with hearty goodwill, and then quietly make for shore. As soon as he lands he should run at full speed a hundred yards or so along the beach, and off

to his clothes as fast as his legs will carry him. A brisk rub with the towel, on with the more needful articles of apparel, and the rest of the toilet can be completed at leisure. A sharp walk homewards, a little more elaborate toilet, and you feel fit to knock down an ox and eat him afterwards, as the saying is. What a delicious feeling of coolness, yet of healthy glow, pervades the system! What a pleasure it is merely to breathe the fresh air! How heartily you pity the poor misguided beings that have been foolishly simmering in bed instead of enjoying the sea-breezes, and how *very kindly* you take to your breakfast!

Go, if possible, with a friend, if you can with two or three, and be sure to breakfast in company. There are some who will read these lines to whom they will recall kindly remembrances of many an early walk and bracing swim, and of the jovial breakfasts that formed the inevitable sequel. How we used to get over the ground to our bathing-place; how we used to race into the water, surreptitiously slipping buttons and loosening ties on the journey; how we used to splash about in the sea, and try our speed on the shore afterwards! And what an exciting scene it was when one of the party forgot his towel, and announcing that he should take possession of the first he could seize, there was a general race for the coveted article, the last in the race being forced to dry himself as he best could! And what breakfasts we used to pick up in the early morning, ransacking butchers', fish-mongers', and fruiterers' shops, carrying the proceeds home and getting them cooked while we dressed! I know that the whole proceeding was unfashionable in the extreme, but it was very pleasant, and the only persons who were likely to complain were the disappointed late risers who found the cream of the fresh viands gone.

Should, however, the intending bather be a strong swimmer and have some notion of handling an oar, let him betake himself to a boat and pull off to sea some three or four miles and enjoy the luxury of the plunge into deep clear water. Remembering two useful pieces of

advice, namely, always to jump over the stern and not over the side, and to take a short stern-ladder if it should be his first attempt at bathing from a boat. No one who has not a practical experience of the feat has any idea of the difficulty of getting into a boat out of the water, especially if the sea should happen to be running rather high. It is easy enough to seize the gunwale, but, as soon as the hands are clasped on the plank, the legs and body are sucked under the boat, and the least infliction that can be expected is a copious incrustation of tar. Generally, after a great amount of splashing and plunging, the strength fails, the bather is forced to relinquish his hold, and is immediately run down by the boat, so that a solitary expedition is not without danger. Yet, to those who understand the business, the task of getting into the boat is nearly as easy as jumping out of it, and may be achieved in two ways.

The easiest method is, just before leaping into the sea, to thrust the handle of an oar under the seat, leaving the blade to project over the stern. This acts as a handle, and by passing the right leg over it the body is raised out of the water and the entrance into the boat is simple enough. But the legitimate method requires no assistance. The bather swims to the stern, and grasping the taffrail with both hands he beats with his feet on the surface of the water, so as to keep himself stretched horizontally from the boat. Waiting for the moment when the boat sinks between two waves, he gives a plunge with both feet, presses his hands forcibly downwards, and springs forward so that his chest rests on the taffrail. At the next wave, he makes another effort, and rolls quietly into the boat.

A few words about the evening bath. The very idea of a swim after darkness has set in seldom fails to startle those to whom it is first proposed; but I have generally found that when the first attempt has been made, the evening bath becomes almost one of the necessities of existence. In most respects it is managed like that of the early morn-

ing, but the bather should not remain in the water for more than half the period occupied by the morning swim, and however alluring may be the waves, should resist the temptation and return to shore after a quick swim of a hundred yards or so. As the morning bath was the precursor of breakfast, so ought the evening bath to be followed by supper, provided that the bather is accustomed to take that cheerful meal.

Whatever may be the time chosen for bathing, let the reader beware of remaining in the water for too long a period—an error which is daily committed even by those who ought to know better, and which is at the root of the weakening symptoms which so often follow sea-bathing, and which are commonly set down to delicacy of the constitution instead of being attributed, as they ought to be, to the imprudence of the individual. If, on coming out of the water, there is the least feeling of giddiness, or if the tips of the fingers lose their colour, accept those symptoms as a sign that the immersion has been too protracted, and reduce the period at least one third at the next bath. Or even if these symptoms are absent and the bather feels at all languid after dressing, let him know that he must shorten his next bath and be very careful of the sea. The right feeling on leaving the waves is a general consciousness of exultation and lightness, the system should find itself braced and the limbs impatient for action.

It seems almost needless to advise those who cannot swim to remain well within their depth, and yet there are not wanting many foolhardy persons who will venture into the water until it covers their shoulders, forgetful that a larger wave than usual, or a current, unseen but powerful, may in a moment bear them out of their depth. Forgetful, too, that a slight hole of three or four inches deep, such as is often formed round a stone lying on the sand, will be sufficient to submerge the mouth and nostrils, and as effectual a cause of death as if it were a mile in depth and as much in width.

I knew a bather drowned in this

manner, the hole into which he trod being about three inches deep and eighteen inches wide. But it caused him to sink suddenly, so that the water covered his lips: he lost his presence of mind, missed his footing when really within his depth, and was carried away by the tide. On another occasion, while bathing in a river, my companion committed a similar error. Fortunately, the stream, which was rather swift, bore him into shallow water, not deeper than his waist. But even there would he have been drowned, for he also had lost his presence of mind, plunged and kicked with all his might, shouting loudly for help, and was swept floundering down the stream. Wishing to give him a practical lesson on the folly of such proceedings, I allowed him to be thoroughly frightened, and then set him on his feet.

Even to those who can swim some little advice is needed, as I can testify by personal experience, having on one occasion run no small risk of losing my life. One of the first precautions to be taken on arriving at any part of the coast is to learn the run of the tides and the hour of high water. It is astonishing, on visiting the different coasts, how unlike are the tides, how high they rise in some places, dashing the waves half up the cliffs, while in others they advance slowly and wet only a few feet of the rocks. In some places, again, the flowing and ebbing tides run along the shore like a mill-race, while at slack water the bather can swim from shore and back again without needing to try his strength against the stream.

Currents, too, are mightily plentiful off some coasts, and very troublesome affairs they are, putting out all your calculations, carrying you off to the left while you fancy you are making great progress to the right, and altogether behaving in a most treacherous fashion. Besides, many of these currents consist of water which is very much colder than that of the surrounding ocean, and the boundaries of which are so sharply defined, that in crossing a current the arms and hands may be chilled almost to the bone, while the re-

mainder of the body is still in the warm water of the ocean. This sudden change from genial warmth to freezing cold is terribly provocative of cramp, the scourge and terror of all bathers, depriving the stoutest swimmer of all presence of mind as its dread fingers rach the nerves and draw up the muscles into torturing knots of white and corrugated flesh.

Avoid, therefore, currents at all risks and all expenditure of trouble. Though often invisible, and only discoverable by their effects, they may sometimes be detected by the smoother surface and the different reflection from the water. Should, however, the bather be seized with cramp, let him not lose his presence of mind, but, turning on his back, a position which effectually prevents him from sinking, let him knead and rub the suffering part with one hand while with the other he paddles himself towards shore. I have more than once been seized by this terrible foe, and by dint of squeezing, pinching, rubbing, and paddling, have got safely ashore. Indeed, I always do suffer from cramp in one toe, but knowing that no danger can come, I do not trouble myself about it. Cramp is truly a fearful enemy, and has drowned many a victim in water that would scarce have covered his knees while standing upright.

Here perhaps it may be as well to offer a word or two of advice to persons who cannot swim, and who find themselves carried into deep water, or who perchance fall out of a boat or over a ship's side.

There is only one course to follow, but that, if followed, will bring certain safety. The person who finds himself in such a predicament should turn on his back, keep both arms and feet below the surface, hold the body quite still, bend the head as far back as possible, and allow the water to rise until it reaches the lower lip. It will reach no higher, and a living human body in this attitude cannot sink. The brain, which is the heaviest part of the body, and which would tend to drag the face under water, is supported upon the chest, which is rendered buoyant by the air-cells of the lungs,

while the limbs are perfectly upborne by the water as long as they remain submerged.

The *rationale* of this attitude is sufficiently simple. When a person who cannot swim falls into deep water, and finds himself with no support to his feet, a condition which is wholly new to him, he begins to kick and to struggle, and endeavours to lift himself as far out of the water as possible. In fact, he tries to kneel on the surface, aided by his hands, just as if he had fallen through a hole in the ice and were trying to crawl out of the water again. Of course he can never succeed, and in exact proportion to the violence of his struggles, he forces himself under water again. For, every ounce weight that is held in the air becomes unsupported by the water, and tends to force the rest of the body below the surface. Hence, one of the feats in swimming, and one that strongly tests the powers, is to hold an arm or a leg out of the water without being submerged by its dead weight. The water being rather heavier, bulk for bulk, will support as much of the human body as is intrusted to its charge, and acting on this principle, a good swimmer never exhausts his valuable strength by lifting his head and breast out of the water as is done by many ignorant persons, but keeps the whole of his body, and even his chin, resting on the water and supported by it. A high swimmer never lasts.

Of course I have no intention of writing a treatise on swimming, and if I did so, should not expect that any one would be able to swim merely after a perusal of its pages. I did indeed, at Paris, see a man very nearly drowned through his ignorant presumption. Having read a French translation of Franklin's little pamphlet on the art of swimming, and probably practised the stroke while balanced across a chair, he thought himself a swimmer, and boldly jumped into the deep water, with what consequences may be easily imagined. While, therefore, disclaiming all such intentions, I merely profess to give a few words of instruction that are easily carried

out, and may be the means of saving many a valuable life.

So, if any of my non-swimming readers should have the misfortune to get into deep water, let them observe the following instructions, and assure themselves of safety. Don't scream, you have no breath to spare. Don't struggle, you have no strength to spare. Kicking makes you gasp, and gasping makes you sink. Turn on the back, press the back of the head between the shoulders, and allow the body to sink until the water touches the eyes and lower lip. Above all things, remember to keep the hands and feet under the surface, and if you feel a succouring hand, don't twist round and grasp at it, or you will in all probability drag under water both yourself and your intended

rescuer. It is not easy, but it can be done and has been done, and the reader may be assured that the most certain way to escape danger is to have pondered over the best method of meeting it. Putting aside the special feats which are performed by those accomplished in the art, swimming is nothing more than confidence in the water. A good swimmer never keeps to rules, he swims as he breathes, without knowing it, the possibility of sinking never entering his imagination. Water is an element that likes to be trusted, and if you will confidently deliver yourself over to its charge, it will lovingly bear you in its bosom, rock you gently in its arms, and pour through your frame new streams of life and health.



POOR RICHARD'S SAYINGS,
WITH ANNOTATIONS BY THE LORD DUNDREARY.



I CAN'T THMOKE A PIPE: NO, BY JOVE, I CAN'T. (P. 330.)

A FELLAH once told me that another fellah wrote a book before he was born—I mean before the *first* fellah was born (of course the fellah who wrote it must have been born, else, how could he have written it?)—that is a long time ago—to pwove that a whole lot of pwoverbs and things that fellahs are in the habit of quoting were all nonsense.

I should vewy much like to get that book. I—I think if I could get it at one of those spherical—no—globular—no, that's not the word—circle—circular—yes, that's it—circulating libwawies (I knew it was

something that went round)—I think if I could just borrow that book from a circulating libwawy—I'd—yes, upon my word now—I'd twy and read it. A doothed good sort of book that, I'm sure. I—I always *did* hate pwoverbs. In the first place, they, they're so howbibly confusing—I—I always mix 'em up together—somehow, when I twy to weckomember them. And besides, if ewevy fellah was to regulate his life by a lot of pwoverbs, what—what a beatly sort of uncomfortable life he would lead!

I remoleckt—I mean remember—

when I was quite a little fellah—in pinafores—and liked wasbewwy jam, and—and a lot of howwid things for tea—there was a sort of collection of illustwated pwoverbs hanging up in our nursery at home. They belonged to our old nurse—Sarah—I think—and she had 'em fwanned and glazed. 'Poor—Richard's,' I think she called 'em—and she used to say—poor dear—that if ewevey fellah attended to eweveything Poor Richard wote, that he'd get vewy wich, and l-live and die—happy ever after. However—it—it's vewy clear to me that—he couldn't have attended to them *himself*, else, how did the fellah come to be called *Poor Richard*? I—I hate a fellah that pweaches what he doesn't pwactise. Of courth, if what he said was twine, and he'd stuck to it—he—he'd have been called—Rich Richard—Stop a minute—how's that? Rich Rich-ard? Why that would have been *too* rich. Pwaps that's the reason he pwferred being Poor. How vewy wich!

But, as I was saying, these picture pwoverbs were all hung up in our nursery, and a more uncomfortable set of makthims—you never wead. For instance, there was

'EARLY TO BED AND EARLY TO RISE
MAKES A FELLAH HEALTHY, AND
WEALTHY, AND WISE.'

I don't b'lieve a word of that—I'll tell you why. To begin with 'healthy.' When Sam and I were children we were all packed off to bed about eight or nine o'clock—just when a fellah ought to be dining—and had to get up at six or seven—quite the middle of the night you know—and pway did *that* keep us healthy? On the contawwy, we were always getting meatheles, or whooping-cough, or vaccinathion, or some howwid complaint or other. As for mental impwovement, it's not the slightest use in *that* way, for I twied it at Oxford. When all the men of my time were sitting up weading for modewations, with wet towels round their heads, and dwinking gween tea—I—I went to bed—I did—and what was the consequence? I don't mind telling you now—but I—I was *plucked*.

And then about 'wealthy.' Look

at my bwother Sam. *He* used to be out shooting *vewy* early—I'm sure when he was home—and you know he's not over flush just now. That weminds me—he—he borrowed a couple of ponies of me just before he left England—and stwange to say—he's forgotten all about it since. But I never *could* make Sam out. He's such a—doothid inconthsequential fellah—Sam is.

Then there was another of 'Poor Richard's' pwoverbs (confound him!)—

'BUY WHAT THOU HAST NO NEED OF,
AND ERE LONG THOU WILT SELL THY
NECESSARIES.'

'Buy what thou hast no need of.' Th—that's a *vewy* nice sort of mowwal makthim—that is. Why, th—that's precisely what I *do* do. I'm always buying something or other that I don't want. I—I bought wather a neat thing latht the season. Th—they'd only just come out then. I d-daresay *ewevey* fellah's got one now—and—s-so there's no use in having it any longer—but 'twas a Vewy neat sort of thing though—*weally*. I'll t-tell you what 'twas like.

If you l-looked stwaight at it, you know—it l-looked like an umbwella—and—s-so it was an umbwella—*weally*—and—and, ha, ha—that's the beth of the joke—but it—it was a lot of other things bethide. In the first place, the stick was an air-gun, which you could use, you know, in *fine* weather—when it was—wasn't raining, and you didn't want the umbwella. A uthefule sort of thing an a-air-gun is, I'm told, in the—the backwoods and those sort of howwid places, when you haven't got—you know—a *regular* gun. Well, and then the handle was made of ivowy, d'ye see?—yes—that was it—an ivowy handle—and it opened, you know, with a thort of hinge—and inside was a—was a pipe case—lined with blue satin (a doothid pwetty sort of notion that, I always thought—blue satin.) The inventor of that machine m-must have been a man of taste. If I could only f-find him out, I'd—I'd ask him to bweakfast, I would, by Jove. I—I always like to encouwage taste, and the fine arts—and—and all those

sort of pwetty works of genius). Well, the handle was a pipe case, with a m-most stunning sort of m-meerschaum pipe inside and an amber mouthpiece. 'Tou my word now—it was a jolly sort of pipe—*weakly*. I—I never thmoked it myself, you know—I can't thmoke a pipe (no, by Jove, I can't: it aint my fault—I HAVE twied, and it's no go, so I stick to chewoots and cigarettes)—but I hear the pipe is a stunner—at least my friend Bagster says so, and h-he ought to know—for he bowwowed it one f-fine morning s-soon after I bought it, and he—ha, ha!—he's never returned it since. B-but then he always was a good judge of pipes, Bagster was. Well—th-that wasn't all, for when you unsquood the ferrule at the end, there was a jolly pencil-case; and if you unsquood it again, there was a place for leads and india-wubber, and—let me see—oh, yes—I wemember now—if you squood it all back again vewy much indeed, out popped a jolly little gold pen—to be sure *that* wasn't m-much use without the ink—but th-then, you know—if—if a f-fellah's got a pencil—he—he doesn't want to wite with ink, does he?—at least no *reasonable* fellah does—and—if he ever d-did—I know a stunning dodge—You—you can have a little bottle made, with a gold top, you know—a kind of a thort of a lady's-companion-looking-thing—and hang it on your watch chain like a 'charm.' That's not a bad idea of mine, is it? I—I've a good mind to take out a patent for that—I have!

I forgot to say that about half-way down the stick there was a place for a penknife—and a toothpick and corkscreww—all—you know—vewy utheff things in their way—es-pecially the corkscreww.

The worth of it was that—somehow or other—I never wanted any of 'em. So I think Poor Richard was *wrong* after all—to tell a fellah to buy what he has no n-need of—and as for s-selling my *necessaries*—I—I'm dash'd if I'll do anything of the kind—n-no—not for P-poor Richard—nor—nor ANY OTHER MAN.

But there's one vewy nonthenisical pwoverb which says

'A B-BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH.'

Th-the man who invented that pwoverb must have been a b-born idiot. How the dooth can he t-tell the wewitative v-value of poultry in that pwomithcuous manner? Suppothe I've got a wobbin-wed-bweast in my hand—(I nearly had the other morning—but he flew away—confound him!—well—suppothe the two birds in the bush are a b-bweast of partwidges—you—you don't mean to t-tell me that that wobbin-wed-bweast would fetch as m-much as a bweast of partwidges? *Abthurd!* P-poor Richard can't gammon me in *that* sort of way.

Then there's another—

'THE PITCHER GOES OPT TO THE WELL, BUT THE PITCHER AT LAST MAY BE BROKEN.'

Now this I take to be a sort of alle—What is that word now, which m-means something diffevent to what it *weakly* means?—an alle—alligator?—no—allicompane—alkali?—all—no—*allegory*—that's it. The pitcher is a sort of allegowy—and means, of courth, a person. Well—if—if a person goes t-to the *well*, it stands to all weason th-that he can't go to the *bad*; and if he dothn't go to the b-bad—he can't be bwoken—so Poor Richard's out again *there*. But if he *weakly* means a pitcher—a thing for holding wa-ter, you know—why, suppothing it is bwoken (as any *weak* pitcher may be—any day of the week), the only thing a fellah can do is to b-buy another. They're not so vewy expensive, after all. I d-dare say you could buy a stunner for half a cwown—so what's the use of making such a jolly wow about it?

This eccentwio old party then goes on to say, that

'THOSE WHO LIVE IN GLASS HOUSES SHOULDN'T THROW STONES.'

Now, considewing what a vewy small pwoportion of people occupy tenements of this desciption, I should have thought the best thing to say would have been, 'Th-those who d-don't live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.' I—I'm sure it would have embwaced a gweater n-number of the community—p-par-

ticularl th-those little b-black-guards in the stweets, who can never even have been in the Cwystal Palace in their lives—and yet are always shying things about—b-beathly balls that hit you—and then webound back in a mistewious sort of way into their hands—and playing at t-tip-cat—a howwid kind of

game, in which a fellah strikes a bit of wood on the ground that flies up into the air—and—and if it doesn't hit you, *he* wins—that is, he gets it back again—and if—if it *does* hit you, you lose—that is, you lose your temper—at least I know I do.

But the m-most widiculous mak-thim of all is—



'TIP-CAT.'

'TAKE CARE OF THE PENCE, AND THE POUNDS WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.'

Did you ever hear such nonthense? If there's one thing I hate to cawwy about with me it'th coppers. Somehow or other—I never had but vewy few pence in my life—and those—I—I gave away to one of th-those organ fellahs in the stweet. Ha, ha!—I suppothe he bought m-monkeys or some howwid thing with it—I—I don't care. I only hope I shall never see any more b-beathly coppers again—howwid things! Fancy!—I

had to put them in my pocket—I—I hate putting things in my pocket. Th—that's a sort of thing *no* fellah should do—it spoils the shape of one's clothes so. And then the muff says that the pounds will take care of themselves! I don't b'lieve a word of it. Besides—I don't mind cawwyng pounds—I mean pounds *thtering*, not poundth *weight*, of course—I rather like pounds. They—they'd be pwetty little things—if it wasn't for the change. But then a fellah can always give the change away, if he likes.

Let me see—th-there's something

more about money than Poor Wichard says—Oh, I we remember:—

‘*If you would know the value of money, try to borrow some.*’

By Jove—yes—he—he’s wite *there*—he’s wite at last—Poor Richard is.—(If he’d been *Rich* Richard he wouldn’t have hit that off so well.)—Yes—if you would know the value of money, twy to *borrow* some. Vewy twue—and I’ll tell you an-

ther thing—when you’ve found out how valuable it is—ha, ha!—NEVER LEND IT.

Th—that’s my makthim.

You see I’m th-thinking of bwother Sam—and th-those unfortunate ‘ponies.’ I d-don’t suppothe I shall see them or S-Sam again for a long time. . . . Bleth them! bleth them! Exkewth these tears.

DUNDEEARTY.

THREE LOVES IN A LIFE.

‘**I** LOVE’—‘And I love’—‘And I love, too’—
They all loved well, and they loved but one.

Each heart was hers, and each heart was true—

By which shall she, the beloved, be won?
Strong on each was her gentle thrall;

Oh! how dear was she held by all!

The first was a youth in opening life;

And he was charmed with her beauty rare,
With the face and form of his fair young wife,

With her sweet blue eye and her silken hair,
Gazing then on her charms with pride,
Oh! how dear was his lovely bride!

The next had lived to his manhood’s prime;

And he admired all her thoughts so wise;
How gracefully, at fit place and time,

Counsels sage to her lips would rise.
Her woman’s wit would silence strife—
Oh! how dear was his prudent wife!

The last is an older, life-worn man;

And he delights in her tender heart,
Which loveth as only woman’s can,

And cheers him with woman’s heaven-taught art.
This loving heart is all his own—
Oh! how dear has his fond wife grown!

In youth I saw but a maiden fair;

And finding beauty I sought no more,
But loved and wedded as youth will dare,

And little knew of the prize I bore.
Proud was I ‘midst my fellow-men,
Dear to me was my young wife then.

But as life advanced and cares came thick—

On every side came pressing round,
Till my wearied heart grew faint and sick—

Ever her at my side I found,
With words of counsel wise and free;
Dearer still was she then to me.

Her hair is grey, and her sweet blue eyes,

Though loving still, are no longer bright:
And I list not now for her thoughts so wise;

But far stronger ties our hearts unite.
Dear through life has she ever been—
Dearest now at its close serene.

ON BEING SHUNTED.



MOONLIGHT ON THE BEACH: A SKETCH AT RAMSGATE.

By J. D. Whitton.

I WAS at a railway station the other day, sitting forlornly on a hard wooden bench, with the horrible conviction that I had nearly an hour to wait before the arrival of any train. The down train, by which I did not want to go, and for which I was, of course, in excellent time, had just shrieked, whistled, and forged slowly away. The haughty priestesses who condescend to supply what are facetiously termed 'refreshments' had almost disappeared behind the counter, sitting so that only their heads could be seen dotted among the brass coffee-urns, or forming pleasant backgrounds to the sandwich piles; the ticket-clerk had closed his window with a bang, and was paring his nails, and whistling 'Ah, che la morte' with all his might; and several of the porters had retired into a mysterious hole, whence came a fragrant smell of wheel-grease and lamp-oil. I looked

round for my little boy, whom I had left deeply engaged in examining the illustrated covers of the books on the stall, but he was no longer there; and I presently discovered him, with his grave little face and his deep, earnest eyes, listening to an old porter, who was leaning with his back against a first-class carriage, which he had just pushed to the far end of a siding of the railway shed.

'Shunted is what we call it, master,' said the old man—'put here in limbo, to rest like, out o' the way. This heer carriage have been goin' up and down, up and down the line for iver so many months, now rattlin' Express, now crawlin' Parliamentary, but allays on the go. And now the guv'nor heer have give orders that she's to be laid by, and afore she goes out again she'll be thoroughly overhauled, and have her framework looked to, and be new-riveted and greased, and made to run—ah! as

slick as when she was first new out of the coachmaker's yard.'

My little boy nodded, and seemed much interested in the fate of this carriage, walking gravely round it, and glancing at the wheels with a professionally half-shut eye, as if he were a man of mature age, whose every thought had been devoted to coach-building; but I retraced my steps to my hard wooden bench, and fell to pondering on what the old man had said, chewing the end of it, and working out an analogy between the railway-carriage and the human machine called Man. I have thought of it many times since; and as many of my thoughts recur to me now, as I sit at this open window, with the lovely green sea shimmering in the sunlight before me, as the voices of the children come up in bursts of rippling laughter from the sands, as a great, glorious, nothing-doing Idlesse seems everywhere prevalent—as, in fact, I feel myself utterly and thoroughly shunted for the present, I will take advantage of the opportunity, and say what I have to say about it.

'Put here in limbo, to rest like, out o' the way.' That is what the old man said, and that is my condition at the present moment. Here in England it is, thank God! the custom for us to shunt ourselves off the grand trunk railroad of business, in tearing up and down which our lives are mainly passed, into some quiet siding once every year. For one month in every twelve you cast the slough with which use and the world have encrusted you, and seem to find underneath an old, long-forgotten nature, a tendency to think and act in a fresh, frank, spontaneous manner—a boyish earnestness and energy, a childish innocence and purity—all of which you recognize as having at one time formed part and parcel of your being, but from which you have been long—ah, how long!—estranged. Once in every year that hook which keeps the mind in such a state of tension is relaxed; and as the strong spring flies back, we lose connection with all the work and worry to which we have been bound, and at once revert to earlier hopes and higher aspira-

tions. Once free, once out of the magic circle made 'of woven paces and of waving hands,' in which, though we do not 'lay as dead,' Merlin-like, but are continually pacing round and round, and tugging against collar, mill-horse fashion—once escaped from this soul-depressing bondage, we can

'Shake to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town;'

and surprise ourselves by our renewed elasticity both of mind and body.

Thoroughly to enjoy and appreciate the exquisite sensation of being shunted, you must be a man of hard and anxious work, whose brain is constantly on the stretch, whose mind is in a state of necessarily forced activity. And, singularly enough, if you be in this state, and if you have tolerable health, you shall be so fascinated by the whirl of business, by the tearing pace at which you are going—which makes nothing of bumps and jolts, flying over them without perceptible inconvenience, and reducing even collisions to a *minimum*—that the notion of being shunted, be it only temporarily, shall not occur to you until a particular season. It is, I think, when such green as we are allowed in the suburbs of London begins to turn brown, when the children's faces begin to grow pallid, and the baby, secretly prompted by the nurse, or even perhaps by the mother, takes advantage of her usual morning visit to your study to lay her pudgy little fist on your knee, and to ask when 'thew is down' to thee-thide'—when, after a long stretch of thought, you find the just-written lines running into each other before your eyes, while you have a curious buzzing sensation in your head—when your looking-glass tells you that your face is rather more like parchment than ever—when July is running into August, and everything is breaking up, you feel that your business for the season—be it in commerce, law, or literature—is achieved, and that the time for your being temporarily shunted has arrived. And when this determination is arrived at, it should be put

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in force instantly, and held to in all its rigour. By which I mean that the shunting must be thorough—not a mere transposition from one rail to another, but an absolute 'putting in limbo, to rest like, out o' the way.' Thus shunted, Mr. Replevin, Q.C., shall by no means receive per post oblong documents, indorsed with 'The Queen v. John Cade and others. With you Mr. Cognovit. An early consultation is requested'—the receipt of which would induce him to knit his brows into horseshoes, and to rub energetically at what remains of his chinchilli head of hair, while

in the agonies of thought; but he shall lie with the children on the beach, and let the glorious sea-breeze blow all the Westminster Hall cobwebs out of his brain. Thus shunted, Dr. Scalpel shall forget Sir Marsh Mallow's cough and Mrs. Runt's expectations, and ease his brain, and rest his hand, and come back with his own constitution so full of ozone, that a mere glimpse of him will have a salutary influence on a patient. Thus the shunted *littérateur* shall eschew books, and even newspapers—lest an adverse criticism might upset all the good that



the shunting was doing; and the shunted City-man shall take his boy down to the sea-marge, and chat to him of shells, and whelks, and sea-anemones, never once casting a thought towards his ventures and his argosies, and pale underwriters trembling at Lloyd's.

I have spoken of the influence, material and moral, of being shunted, and I think I can now explain what I mean. When you are in

town, in your full swing of work, called upon, as it were, at a moment's notice to rush off at your express speed, to be ready with your fires banked down and your steam up, and to discharge your requisite duty, you lie in your heavy stertorous sleep, your muscles relaxed, your head heavy, your mind even filled with fragmentary remnants of past worries rehabilitated in your dreams; and when the arousing

knock comes to your chamber door you bundle out, duty-compelled, and are never thoroughly awake until you find yourself in your tub, and the cold water splashing round you. Even in this small scrap of wakefulness you have managed to worry yourself; swiftly through your mind have rushed thoughts of the work which should have been completed last evening, and which you were too sleepy to finish—recollections of the daily task, never-ending, still-beginning, which you must undergo, and must meet cheerfully, in order to hold your ascribed position in the world—bills to be paid, appointments to be kept, work to be done. It is a sad and an unsatisfactory time, this early morning, for reflection. One feels half inclined to say with the Yankee philosopher 'Let it slide!' Come what come may, but free me from this daily drudgery. 'There's no joy but calm; why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?' Let us have a little infusion of lotos-eating in this busy life—let us have a little cessation of this mill-horse round—and then perhaps one of the children will rush in to say 'Good morning'—so full of life and spirits, so fresh and healthy and rosy, that all the dreary notions will fly before the sight, and your better self will accept the thing that is, and you will thank God for having given you these little ones, and with them strength, and health, and ability to minister to them. But the work is heavy and drear; all day long you are battling with it, and by the time night arrives you return sick to death of the conflict, and of the means you have been compelled to employ to take your due share in it; and during all the evening your mind is engaged in thinking over what you have done that day, and what you have to do the next.

But the blessed time for being shunted approaches, and with its approach you feel yourself a different being. Family arrangements have to be made, all of which give a foretaste of coming happiness—Bradshaw consulted as to times, fares, and whereabouts, becomes a glorious work, never referred to without

much mind-wavering, but never closed without a certain sense of comfort. And when the day of release itself arrives, when the cabs are at the door—better still when you are all seated in the train—how are you repaid for your eleven months' toil! Who has the pull then?—the hard-worked Londoner or the born-and-bred landowner? Lord De Rougecoffer and Sir Batenham Southdown are in the next compartment to yours, but they look neither to the right nor to the left, and their talk is of the incomplete registration of voters, and the chances of the Tories at the forthcoming election. Farmer Gill sits in the second-class within a few feet of you, his hands clasped over his ashen stick, his brows knit, and his thoughts full of the disease in sheep. But you!—you are sitting at the open window, drinking in the prospect with your eyes, and the glorious fresh breath of heaven with your nostrils. A primrose by the river's brim was to Peter Bell but a yellow primrose, and nothing more; but to you each succeeding phase of the landscape is the realization of a long-desired dream. The sun-tanned reapers, standing breast-high amid the sea of waving corn, and shading their swarthy faces with their hard hands to gaze at the fleeting train; the quaint, ugly little church, like a petrified haystack, nestling down in the valley, with its few old graves like heaving billows round it; the sleepy pool, with cud-chewing cattle on its margin, or knee-deep, cooling in its willow-reflecting water; the chalk-pit shining in the face of the cliff; the breezy upland, stretching far away, and dotted here and there with nibbling sheep—all these make up a panorama most refreshing to the street-wearied eyes, and fill the city-sodden brain with thick-coming fancies. And when, at last, after the shrieking, screaming rush through the dark tunnel, we find the glorious expanse of blue sea, vast, profound, horizon-bounded, lipping with tender ripple the beach at our feet, we feel that our holiday has really begun, and that we are fairly shunted.

The material advantages of being

shunted continue on the arrival at the sea-side. The tired Londoner finds himself waking at a very early hour in the morning, and, instead of having his eyelids sewn together, and his sodden frame utterly disinclined to move, he is bright, brisk, and lissome. Then comes a sea-bath, taken timidly at first, but persevered in with such success that, after the second day, he will raise his feet and try to swim, and then all the old lessons learnt and practised in the silver-rippling trout-stream which bordered the playing-field of his school will come back to him, and he will swim far away into deep blue water, reveling in his recovered pastime. Then the children have a swimming-lesson from him, and then there is the run on the sands after the bath; then breakfast—such a breakfast! and then the long delicious laze, supine on the beach, or idly pitching pebbles into the crawling foam; then the early dinner, the long strolling walk through sweet-smelling country lanes, or over breezy downs, the final stroll on the pier, watching the fishermen putting off for their nightly avocation in the bright moonlight, the cheerful supper, and the early bed. And under all this, and the blessed influence of quiet, his eye shall become doubly bright, his shoulders lose their rounded stoop, his step grow firm and elastic, and his muscles, anon so flaccid and puny, become firm and vigorous; so that his wife, gazing from her window at him playing with the children on the beach, shall recognize in the sober husband of her prime, many of the personal traits of the lover of her youth, traits which worldly contact had almost obliterated, and she shall bless God for their revival.

And the moral advantages of being shunted are as certain and as satisfactory. 'Looking through nature up to nature's God,' the man who has hitherto 'shunted' religion, as it were, not from scepticism or any actual intention, but from sheer pressure of business, from the weariness which tempts us to use the Sabbath morning for purposes of rest rather than prayer, now finds

himself so penetrated and touched by all the natural beauties of the fields, the sky, and the ocean, that his thoughts insensibly turn from them to their Creator, and he visits the country church on the Sunday with a half-shy feeling, which expands into a curious *mélange* of sensations as the grand old sonorous sentences of the church service ring upon his ears, carrying him back to the days when his mother's finger guided him through each line of the prayer-book, and when done up with the monotonous buzzing of the sermon, he fell asleep on his mother's breast. And here, again, the moral advantage has a chance, for our 'shunted' friend, if he be wise, will shun the gimcrack new church on the Parade, with its crosses and altar-cloths and upholsterial nonsense, and will betake himself to the old parish church, where he shall find luxurious pews like loose boxes, and plenty of them unoccupied. And I, for one, heartily decry the present system of open stalls in churches, as tending to a mere verbal and outward performance of the ritual; for assuredly I shall break no rule of decorum, but accept all my responses with the solemnest politeness and gravity, while I am in sight of the congregation; whereas, in a corner of one of those great old pews, I might throw myself prostrate and confess myself a miserable sinner, invisible to all eyes save those of Him to whom I humbled myself.

But to be shunted is, in my opinion, only to be sent down to lie fallow in some marine or rustic retreat; a brisk visit to the Continent, which is the mode of spending one's holiday according to the present fashion, can scarcely come under this denomination. It is rather, to keep to the language of the railway-pointsman, to be 'switched,' i. e., to be run on a different line of rails, indeed; but it by no means implies rest. And though a continental ramble is of most excellent service to young men, who will find the Rhine, the Schwazwald, the Tyrol, the Oberland, and the Savoy Alps quite excitement enough without Matterhorn climbing, or Monte

Rosa ascents, yet the middle-aged British manufacturer (who takes his daughters abroad for the purpose of showing them 'foreign parts'—none of the party being able to speak a word of the language, and feeling themselves small every time they

attempt a meal, when the smiling waiter proffers his *menu*, and waits in vain for a response) would do better to think twice before he gives up the substance of a sea-side holiday for the shadow of a 'tour.'

In one other form has this ques-



tion come before me; but I doubt whether this be the place to allude to it, or, granted that, whether the extremely unsatisfactory pen, which this sea-side village has afforded me, will condescend to interpret my thoughts. Gazing at my children, watching an intense flirtation which has sprung up between my eldest boy and a little girl from neighbouring lodgings, it struck me that old Time was still a-flying, and that speedily would come a time when the shunting would be not merely temporary, but permanent—when the human mechanism shall begin to beat sluggishly, and to creak on its hinges, and to show a tendency to running down; when the physicians sent for to stoke the fires of life shall shake their heads and recommend rest. Then will our best

course be to take our superannuation from our office, or to yield our leadership of the circuit, or our long-held post of smartest novelist, or what not, to the successors who so long since thought we ought to retire, and allow ourselves to be permanently shunted, 'put by in limbo, to rest like, out o' the way.'

A dull time that, very inactive, but one that will come to most of us. Will it, or will it not, be preferable to one that *must* come to all when our

—'Light is low,
When the blood weeps and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.'

Happy for us at *that* time if our race has been profitably run, and if we have not misused those intervals when we were 'shunted.' Q.

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Drawn by J. D. Watson.

HOLIDAY LIFE AT RAMSGATE.





'ON THE GALLERY STAIRS—A SHILLING DAY. (Drawn by Florence Claxton.)

ONCE MORE AT THE EXHIBITION.

'ONLY once a year,' say the little boys who call attention to their grotto of oyster-shells, who think their chance of obtaining a halfpenny improved by the rarity of the appeal—'Only once a year.' Well, be it so, as concerns grottos. In relation to International Exhibitions, if we were claiming coppers on their behalf, the appeal would be even more strongly based; seeing we are told that they are to be ten or eleven years apart. Be this as it may, there is not much probability that 'London Society' will open many more of its pages to those grand displays—until it becomes a respectable old periodical, say in 1872. We want, however, to show the reader another little handful of those queer things which, whether useful or useless, strike one by their queerness. Pope, speaking of the flies and insects often seen in bits of amber, said,—

'The things we know are neither rich nor rare,
The wonder's how the devil they got there.'

Some of the things at the Exhibition are rich and some rare; and of the rest, we do not at all accuse the dark gentleman of having brought them there. But still, there they are, some to be wondered at, some to be laughed at.

What, for instance, shall we say of the bottle-cork Cathedral—is it worth the labour bestowed upon it? For our part, we are not disposed to be hard upon the artist. He is a Lincolnshire labourer, who for ten years has collected all the bottle-corks within his reach (a million, he says), and has carved and fashioned them into a model of Lincoln Cathedral—towers, transepts, porches, spire, and all. Was not this a better employment for leisure evenings than sitting at the 'Pig and Whistle,' in Fen-cum-Washby? He must have given

hundreds of glances at the fine old cathedral in the course of his work, and have watched with exactness the buttresses, and tracery, and mouldings; and a man can hardly do that without being a little the better for it. There is an excusable vanity, too, in the display of the old knives with which he cut the corks, and of the old whetstone on which he sharpened the knives. There are many other cork models in the Exhibition less praiseworthy than this, because models of sham temples and fanciful structures less worthy of study than one of our glorious old cathedrals. The patient labourer values his ten years' work at a hundred pounds; and we say with more sincerity than irony that—we wish he may get it.

It is a marked feature among many of the articles in the Exhibition, that they are made of substances not at all intended for such purposes, and—it must be confessed—in some cases not at all suited for them. There is an 'Oh!' of admiration, and an 'Oh!' of surprise, not by any means identical. Witness those Danish portraits and pictures done in hair; we have never yet seen any bystanders admire *them*, except perhaps for the tiresome, technical difficulty of producing them. The feather-flowers from Brazil are remarkable rather for the wondrous glowing colours of South American plumage, than for the success of the imitation; and as for the landscape made of insects' wings, we can only wish that those beautiful wings were applied to some better purpose. The shell-work grasses and bouquets; the fish-scale brooches and head-dresses; the bog-oak ornaments from Ireland; the straw-plait flowers, insects, and animals from Switzerland—are all prettinesses in their way, and we will not bear hard on them. The smoke made of tin, coming out of the tin cigars in the mouths of the tin soldiers from Hanover, is another example of incongruity of material. But of all the strange conceits in this class, perhaps the strangest are the Austrian lucifer-match pictures—the midnight moonlight scene in a forest, and the flaring coat-of-arms.

Herr Pollak and Herr Fürth are famous for making those neat round lucifers which run our square lucifers so closely in the market; the tipping with composition is better done, and the colours are more diversified. Perhaps these Austrians and Bavarians reasoned thus—'Does not his Holiness the Pope carry on a factory for making mosaic pictures with little bits of enamel; and may not we therefore make mosaic pictures with little bits of wood coloured at the ends?' They have done it, and, it must be confessed, with a certain sort of cleverness; but—the sly-boots: they have tipped the matches with sham composition, to get over the difficulty about the non-admissibility of dangerous chemicals into the building; and so the lucifer-matches are not lucifer-matches after all!

The clock-work knick-knackeries are in strong force at the Exhibition—not only in those elaborate clocks and watches which undertake to tell us all about the ages of the sun, and moon, and stars, but in small affairs which do not profess to be useful in any sense. One worthy Swiss, to show that he can make watches thinner than 'any other man,' has put one inside a crown piece, which, with this extraordinary food in its inside, only looks a little fatter than other crown pieces. Another has made a watch not larger than a shirt-button, for which he asks the respectable sum of two hundred and fifty guineas. Another has produced a pistol 'able to fire,' as the card announces: it is informative, certainly, being only a quarter of an inch long, and weighing only a quarter of a grain, and yet being made up of twenty pieces. Another class comprises those singing and chirping birds which have been so much talked about. The one exhibited in the Swiss department is not better than hundreds of its kind; they were to be found in the Hyde Park Exhibition eleven years ago, and are a common article of production in Switzerland. Nevertheless, the little fellow in the over-crowded Swiss court occupies a niche of glory by himself; he is the

only bullfinch who ever made a munificent subscription to a district of distressed operatives, and he will be handed down to history with this in his favour. If his little body could be laid open to view, and examined with a lens, we should see how wonderful is the mechanism necessary for fluttering the wings and producing the song. Not so minute, nor nearly so successful, are the automaton figures in the French Court. It is very melancholy fun indeed for us to hear the cat, dog, monkey, and cock go through their performances, and make their poor attempts to imitate the sounds of the real animals; and as to the evolutions of the lady rope-dancer and the ship at sea, they are not very happy effects, for the wires are too conspicuous.

The piping bullfinch and the tiny pistol are not the only articles of which the smallness is deemed the greatest merit. There are, for instance, those little French transparent photographs, which so upset one's ideas of size and appearance. You see placed before you a tiny opera-glass barely half an inch long, or a cross about the same length, or a little barrel; and when you look through them up at the light, you see a picture which seems ten or twenty times as large as the receptacle that contains it. There is a good deal of work needed to produce these trifles; for, in the first place, a photograph is taken from a picture by the diminishing or contracting process; and then, a tiny lens is used to enlarge this photograph to a suitable size for visibility. Still more wonderful are the micrographs in the Philosophical Instrument compartment. An ingenious mechanician has invented a machine whereby writing can be engraved on glass with a minuteness almost inconceivable—so small, indeed, that the whole of the Bible, if engraved in similarly minute characters, might be included in a space an inch long by three-eighths of an inch broad! It is veritable writing, the glass being engraved in a running hand with a diamond point. There is no deception here: one of those

tiny bits known to children as 'hundreds and thousands' would cover, many times over, the space occupied by the Lord's Prayer thus engraved. It requires a microscope of very powerful character to render this wonderful writing legible; but when thus magnified (as shown in the North Gallery at the Exhibition), the writing reveals itself as being veritably such as is here described. We know few results of modern ingenuity more marvellous than this.

How delighted some of the exhibitors are to display their wares in forms which may attract by their novelty—attract attention if not admiration. We may wonder how they got there—that is, the soap busts of Queen Victoria and the late Prince Consort from Württemburg; and the Dutch and Austrian tallow temples, in which columns of unknown architectural support, impossible cornices and pediments made of candles; and the temple of arts formed of two thousand vegetable ivory nuts; and the Diana in chocolate paste, two feet high; and the vase of flowers made of sugar; and the model of Rebecca at the Fountain, from Horace Vernet's picture, made by M. Lassimonne in the same saccharine material (and for which he asks five hundred francs); and the ship, made of tobacco, with tobacco sails and rigging, majestically reposing on a tobacco sea, flanked by a tobacco eagle and a tobacco basket, and enclosed within an ornamental tobacco rope.

We can scarcely find the heart to quarrel with Messrs. Piesse and Lubin, who gratify the world with 'aérial perfumery,' 'arrosoir scent fountains for ball rooms,' 'scent fountains for finger rings,' 'sympathetic blush for pallid cheeks,' 'bien pour veines,' 'bloom of roses for the lips,' 'walnut water to darken the hair,' 'unguenti odoratissima for princesses,' 'egg julep hair-cleaner,' 'belladonna to impart fascination to the eyes,' 'Egyptian kohl for the brows and lashes,' 'kiss me quick,' 'follow-me-lads,' 'stolen kisses,' 'box his ears,' 'sweethearts nose-gay,' 'perfume of Paradise,' 'jolly dog,' 'something new,' and other

fragrant materials for making us all happy and beautiful. But then these gentlemen insinuate that English ladies, not satisfied with enamelling the skin which nature gives them, do sometimes wish to imitate those oriental charmers who have little but their beauty to recommend them; for the 'Sinai manna' (at twelve shillings a pound, we are glad to say) is accompanied by this eulogium: 'Before a Circassian beauty is sent to the seraglio at Constantinople, she eats about an ounce of a very choice and peculiar description of manna, the Sinai manna, every day, for eight or ten weeks. This has the effect of imparting *embon-point*, or rather, of beautifully rounding all the angles of the human frame; and without the least exaggeration, the result is a form as beautiful as a living *Venus de Medicis*.' If this does not make Sinai manna 'look up in the market' we don't know what will. The above fanciful nomenclature for perfumes naturally brings to one's mind the still more sensational list of beverages sold at the American bar in the Exhibition—gin sling, sherry cobbler, brandy punch, soda cocktail, Union smash (poor Union!) mint julep, cyder cup, Garibaldi, George Washington, Napoleon, morning dew, locomotive, Nike Pina, ladies' wish, bishop, whisky skin, Tom and Jerry, and all the rest of it.

One of the pet plans of the jewellers is to get a pearl of some out-of-the-way shape, detect a resemblance between it and some familiar object, and fashion it up into a suitable mounting. There are some very odd conceits of this kind at the Exhibition. One, in the Danish department, consists of a misshapen pearl, which, by a dexterous application of gold accompaniments, is transformed into a little figure of a Danish skater. Another sufficiently resembles a head and body to have tempted the jeweller into a similar process of man-making. Another, having something of a helmet shape, has been so mounted as to assume the proper helmet form for some imaginary Lilliputian hero. Indeed, the decorative powers of jewellers and goldsmiths, filigree

workers and silver workers, are sometimes displayed in very fanciful ways. Witness that diamond worker, who has produced a profile of Queen Victoria formed of fifteen hundred brilliants—not very advantageously either to the diamonds or to the Queen, so far as effect is concerned. Then there is that human skull set in pure gold by some Chinese workman, and converted into a drinking cup; it was taken from the Summer Palace at Pekin two or three years ago; and we can imagine all sorts of sanguinary beverages that were drunk out of this cup by the Brother of the Sun and Moon. Then, in various parts of the building are those patient little bits of filigree work—such as filigree ships and gondolas, filigree temples, filigree dolls' furniture and dolls' cups and saucers. A Prussian worthy, whose name we are not so fortunate as to recollect, exhibits specimens of ingenuity which combine the materials of the filigree with a favourite sort of work among the Chinese. We all know the Chinese ivory puzzle-balls, in which there is a nest of perforated balls one within another, all carved out of one piece of ivory. Now the Prussian artist has applied this principle with silver as a material. He exhibits a small dead-silver globe within an outer polished silver globe, and both worked in some incomprehensible way out of one piece of silver. Nay, still more: he has a globe within a globe within a globe, the inner globes being wrought through perforations in the outer—an exercise of patient work which, we may hope, is in some way its own reward, for the affair is of no other use. Talking of dolls' filigree furniture, it may be interesting to an enlightened British public to know that 'the model of the first doll ever made by H. Pierotti' is in the International Exhibition. This important fact has, no doubt, been duly reported on by Commissioners and Juries; we are not quite certain whether it was a rag doll, or one of the good old Dutch species; but there is the model at all events, ready to be admired. We may here remark that there are many pretty doll-like figures in the model of the

'Gymnase de l'Hôpital des Enfants Malades,' in the French department. It is intended to represent the internal arrangements of the exercise room of the Hospital for Sick Children at Paris, with the swings, bars, poles, trapèzes, and other gymnastic apparatus. All is very nicely arranged, and it is impossible to avoid seeing how peculiarly French the little damsels are, in their neatly cut grey frocks and trousers: they are little women every one of them, let their ages be what they may. There is, in one of the English departments, a model of an English school-room with its pupils, and of a school-fête under some trees; the children, whether well modelled or not, *are* children; whereas 'enfants de Paris' are men and women on a small scale before they are well out of the nursery.

Pity the sorrows of the wedding cake! Here it is, with some of the pinnacles distorted, some of the fairies and Cupids broken, 'the wreaths of sugar, orange, and other blossoms displaced, the Temple of Hymen in a state of dilapidation grievous to behold, and the frosted adornments sadly broken up. The exhibitor declares, in a tone of grief, that the cake *was* worth one hundred pounds sterling, and it came to sorrow on account of the carelessness of some of the persons employed about the building. Another little history is associated with the two beautiful globes of rock crystal in the Japanese department. One fine day, the *first* fine day perhaps, in the present wet summer, an attendant policeman saw smoke rising from the mahogany stand on which these globes are placed. In an

official fright at the ominous appearance he called for aid, and would, if necessary, have called out a whole brigade of fire-engines. The affair, however, proved to be very innocent, and, in a scientific point of view, rather interesting. Each globe had acted as a burning-glass, conveying the sun's rays to a focus at a particular point on the mahogany stand, and there producing so intense a heat as to char the wood. The globes have been more carefully housed since that time. Another contribution to the Exhibition has, if we remember rightly, been removed from its original place, not for the crime of burning holes in wood, but for the possible burning of holes in the feelings of any Southerners who may be among us. It was the newspaper trophy. The title-headings of about a hundred American newspapers were cut off and pasted edge to edge on a monster board; a queer collection they formed, but among them were only seven or eight southern journals; and the exhibitor had painted a serpent wreathing his coils around those seven or eight—a bit of symbolical politics which was deemed a little out of place in such a building.

One final word of praise for the French popgun boy. He is a genius. He sits all day long popping his guns, as a means of showing young gentlemen that the said guns must necessarily be cheap at sixpence a piece; and while he pops, he reads; his popping does not require the aid of eye-sight, and therefore he can proceed steadily with his book, while the tremendous shots go off at the rate of about three per minute.





NADIRA. (Painted by FRANK WYNNE.)

The fair Sultana listlessly
Leans on her silken couch, and dreams
Of mountain airs and mountain streams.

From the 'Zenana,' an Eastern tale by Miss LANDOW.

PHILIP MORTON:

THE STORY OF A WIFE'S SECRET, A HUSBAND'S TRUST, AND A FRIEND'S STRATEGY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE HOUSE IN PICCADILLY.'

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH SIR ULRIC LYSTER IS RELIEVED OF MUCH ANXIETY.

'On the whole then, you don't think much of the place, Flora?' said Philip, disappointedly, the next morning, as, after having made the tour of the house under Horace Greville's auspices, they were left alone in a pale-blue frayed satin saloon.

'Yes, I do, Philip; at least, not much, perhaps; but I should like it very well if we had it all to ourselves

to alter and improve inside and out.'

'All to ourselves, what are you driving at, Flo? you surely wouldn't have me, when a fellow has been so kind as Greville has, hint at such a thing as his going; here he has given up his chambers and come down here, where he must have been precious dull, by-the-by, to superintendent

affairs for me; and now, because I don't absolutely *want* him any longer, you would have me turn him out.'

Mr. Morton stirred the fire vehemently, and Mrs. Morton had a 'great mind' to tell her husband the real secret of her dislike to Horace Greville, whom she doubted more than ever now; but she remembered the pretty Spanish cousin, and—dared not.

'I don't want you to turn him out, Philip, only I think we shall find it unpleasant if he means to take up his abode with us altogether.'

'Nonsense.'

'I am sure his manner was unpleasant to me, at least, when he spoke just now of Charles's marriage (though Charlie has behaved abominably), and of its being reported that Kate Elton is going to marry that odious Sir Ulric—a thing I do *not* believe.'

'He only mentioned it as a report, Flo; besides, it is true enough, probably; all women are not like you; I dare say Kate Elton is quite capable of being in love with one man desperately, and a few weeks after marrying another; it is despicable, but possible enough. Do get rid of that sort of capricious, womanish jealousy against Greville, my darling. I owe the fellow a deeper debt of gratitude than you are aware of (Morton almost thought that Greville had first caused him to regard Flora now he was defending him), and I should be sorry if my wife rendered my house unpleasant to him.'

'Debt of gratitude! Why, what has he done, Philip? the place must have been a barn, a wilderness, if he has done much to improve it.'

'It was all awfully out of repair, he says,' answered Philip; 'we are going out now to select a spot for a sort of Italian garden for you; he has drawn some splendid plans for it, and I am anxious to see them carried out. What are you going to do this morning, Flo?'

'Write to Kate Elton; you will not stay *all* the morning with Mr. Greville, will you, Philip?'

'No, no; I shall be back in half an hour.' But he was not; for Horace had a great deal to say to

him. So Morton had to listen to suggested improvements, and to hear how much they would cost. The sums seemed large, but then, of course, Greville knew best about such matters, and it must be all right.

Philip Morton was no match for subtle Horace Greville. In spite of the unfeigned desire the former had to please his lovely wife, he found himself, on the spur of a slight hint from Greville, relative to 'going away,' giving the last-named gentleman a warm invitation to remain where he was through all time, if he liked; and somehow or other, in so doing, he felt himself the obliged party. It did occur to him once or twice that his new friend was blessed with very extravagant notions respecting the adornment of his new home; but then he immediately acknowledged that all these notions were strictly correct, and only pointed to making the place what it should be.

Time went on. Still the hitherto useless man of fashion appeared to be acting the part of indefatigable agent for his friend. Still Flora had to submit to his presence in her house and his growing influence with her husband without a word of remonstrance. And still no answer came from Kate Elton as to whether the report of her marriage with Sir Ulric was true or not.

Sir Ulric Lyster was alone in his bachelor quarters in Duke Street. A change had come o'er the spirit of his dream. He was beginning to look upon bachelor quarters, and all appertaining to bachelor and sporting life, with disgust, since he had learned to look on Saint Kevin as faulty, and on Kate Elton as fair. How he wished he had never owned and believed in that terrible horse on whom he had staked so much! How he wished he had abjured the turf before Saint Kevin's much vaunted excellences had tempted him! He was hopeless almost; for, in spite of the good name Saint Kevin still had before the world, his owner was constantly hearing, from the best authority, that both he and his horse would be nowhere. How he dreaded that fatal reckoning day in the not far distant month of June

that would surely come! Were it not for that wretched horse, a little ready money, three or four thousand pounds, would set him straight with the world; leave him his large income clear, and at liberty to claim the hand of Miss Elton. But now ruin stared him in the face. Sir Ulric Lyster was in very low spirits indeed; his breakfast was untasted; cigars were powerless to console him; so was the only light literature he had ever cared to peruse—his 'Book on the Derby.' For what would this hated 'book' bring him now but shame and confusion? He was unhappy, cross, and savagely expectant of some one coming whom he thought ought to have been with him earlier. 'George Berners used not to keep me waiting,' he murmured plaintively to himself, and then he wished he had not confided all his griefs and hopes so entirely to his friend, his pecuniary griefs and his hopes about pretty Kate Elton; for Berners sneered at the one and chaffed him unmercifully about the other. But even while he was indulging in vain retrospections the Honourable George Berners came into the room.

'Heard anything about Saint Kevin?' he asked, as he seated himself opposite to Sir Ulric.

'Heard anything! Now, why on earth should you ask me that, Berners? you know I hear about the brute through you alone; what is there to hear now; something pleasant, I suppose?'

'I should call it pleasant were I in your place, I know that; wouldn't you be glad to get rid of him and everything connected with him, now?'

Sir Ulric made a gesture of utter despair at the improbability of so much happiness.

'Oh, nonsense, look here now; I have heard to-day that you can sell him and his liabilities to a man who is flat enough to believe him a good horse and a winning one for—how much should you think?'

'Don't know,' answered Sir Ulric, suppressing all he could of satisfaction.

'How much should you suppose, now?'

'Who's the man?'

'My dear fellow! that I really can't tell you; he writes—Smith is his name—he writes, you see, to me, as I have been acting for you throughout, and offers you three thousand for your horse and your chances.'

'Then Saint Kevin is safe enough,' said Sir Ulric, rising and gazing steadfastly at his friend, 'then Saint Kevin is safe enough, and I shall keep him.'

The colour flashed over Berners' face.

'Really Sir Ulric,' he said stiffly, 'I am sorry I should have had anything to do with your affairs at all; your determination to keep him is made rather too late, for I have closed with the offer and directed the sum to be placed to your credit at your bankers.'

'Then, by heavens you've cheated me,' exclaimed Sir Ulric, fiercely, 'not but that I shall be glad enough to be clear of the transaction—but to close with a man without asking me—'

'After such an accusation,' said Berners, rising slowly and crushing the little baronet into nothingness by his height, and his elevated Roman nose, and his measured accents, 'we can only meet in one way.'

'Oh, bother,' said Sir Ulric, who was no duellist, 'you needn't want to shoot me, man, after—after all you know; come now—I apologize for the expression I used; there's my hand on it!'

But the Honourable George Berners was stern; no, he said, at any rate all intercourse must cease between them. As he left, Sir Ulric muttered, 'What has he come in for, I wonder?' And Berners said to himself, 'So far all's well; he never suspected Greville of being the man; how could Greville have raised the sum?'

How had he raised the sum? In various ways. In the first place, he had been rather lax in the payments Philip Morton had supposed he had made. He had kept back a good deal, but not enough, he feared, to buy Saint Kevin and his chances, and to give Berners the sum that gentleman wanted for his management

of the affair. To his surprise, Philip, generous, trustful, careless of money as he was, had scrutinized of late the regularity of the payments. True, Philip did not look back at all, or ask for accounts; but there was little to be made through acting for his friend, now that his friend had come home; for unfortunately, Philip seemed inclined to act, very clearly and sensibly, and in a business-like manner, for himself. Horace Greville bided his time; this was his last chance, and he determined not to mar his brightening fortunes through any ill-advised impatience or conscientious scruples. For the furtherance of his plans it was necessary that he should work the mine of Flora's fear through Flora's love for her husband; and he resolved upon doing it when time should serve, though to do so would, he knew, and acknowledged to himself, be cowardly.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WIFE'S MISGIVINGS.

London was pouring itself in hilarious streams down to the first rose and azalea show of the season at the Crystal Palace. It was announced to be a wonderfully attractive day: in addition to the flowers, Titiens and Giuglini were to sing, and Blondin was to thrill the public mind with admiring horror; all these combined with the bright May day sun overhead to draw continuous streams by road and rail. And amongst those who came were Philip Morton, his wife and friend.

The sun, and the flowers, and the music, and the little excitement of the acrobatic performance, all tended to develop the exuberance of that sun and flower and music-loving nature of Philip Morton's. He was in exceedingly high, brightly-overflowing spirits; and as he walked about with his beautiful wife on his arm, his pride in her loveliness and grace had no slight share in these good spirits. He did not notice that Flora's cheek was paler, and Flora's eyes more serious this day than they were wont to be; he did not notice that her replies were efforts, that her smiles were called

up with difficulty, instead of spontaneously illumining her face, as they had ever done before in answer to him. He did not observe that the hand resting upon his arm was a trembling, nervous hand; in fact, though a fond and loving lord, he did not observe that the spirit of his wife was greatly disturbed about something. Had he done so his vivacity would have received a check at once; but he did not, therefore his vivacity remained unchecked, and he himself as free from care as were the flowers that bloomed in such fragrant luxuriance—as free from care as, apparently, was Horace Greville himself.

Apparently only: Horace Greville was as softly deferential to Mrs. Morton as ever, and as frankly lively in his manner to her husband; but not the less was he secretly anxious and uncomfortable. Before starting from the tumble-down Italian villa that morning he had asked a favour with threatening suavity of the mistress of it; and though his request had not met with a denial, it had not been granted exactly; and, as Saint Kevin must be his at all hazards, Horace Greville was anxious and uncomfortable.

Flora Forrester had dearly loved Philip before their marriage, but since that event her love had merged into that passionate, all-absorbing devotion for him that can never be quite unmixed with a latent fear of losing, or doing something to risk the loss of some portion of his regard. She had, at an early stage of their acquaintance, resolved upon never, *never* letting him know that she had once, even for so short a time, nourished a feeling of tenderness—scarcely that indeed—for a 'man so inferior to him in every way'—she said to herself now—as Horace Greville. This knowledge, should he ever come to it, would, she shudderingly thought, surely sow the seeds of distrust of her in his mind; there was madness in the thought. He would be tied, bound to her legally, but he would think lightly of her heart—as lightly as he had done in days of yore of the pretty Spanish cousin. She did not take into consi-

deration the different circumstances ; she only thought that he would consider her one whose love was lightly gained and lightly lost ; that he would distrust the soul-loyalty of his wife ; that she would cease to be what it was her pride to know she was now—his star, his ideal of true, pure, noble womanhood. Mrs. Morton had disliked Horace Greville more and more during these months of enforced intercourse ; but it had never entered into her mind that he could be so thoroughly base as to dream of trading upon her fear and love. This morning, however, before starting for the flower-show, he had come to her and given her to understand very clearly and distinctly, and without the least circumlocution, that unless she would make over to him at once a certain sum he named—or, he wasn't particular—jewels that would represent and could at once be turned into that sum—unless she would do this quietly, unknown to her husband, and trust to his honour (!) to repay her, he would recount to Morton that little scene in the turf-y lane when her heart had been ready to go out to him so warmly. He was candid and honest, in a measure, about it.

'I want the money, awfully,' he said ; 'it is not out of any bad feeling towards you, Mrs. Morton, that I ask you to do it ; I hope you perceive this ? it is simply that I want and must have the money, and I see no other way of raising it, without laying myself open to such a course of questioning as I should not approve. I want the money at *once*, and you must be kind enough to lend it to me. More than this—you must be kind enough to keep the having done so a secret. I tell you frankly, I have no other means of raising it without creating suspicion ; ever since I knew I should want it I determined to try my influence over you and make it useful to me. Flora ! for the sake of old times, for the memory of the love you would have given me before this hot-blooded half-Spaniard made you his, do me this service, and I will soon remove my presence from you *for ever*.'

The appeal was one to stir up, to gall, and wound her pride ; but she dared not refuse. If she did he would 'tell Philip' and down would come her fabric of happiness. For in her trembling, devouring love for her husband she did not stop to reflect how very little, in reality, there was to 'tell' him.

'You must give me till to-morrow,' she said hoarsely ; and then she went to prepare for her day's pleasure. She looked airy, graceful, lovely in her costume of blue and white—as airy, as graceful, as pure and fresh as a convolvulus—but she was horribly uneasy. To do this that Horace Greville asked her would be indeed to do a thing that she would tremble for her husband to learn ; and yet!—and yet!—dared she risk angering Horace ? dared she contemplate the probability of Philip ever looking coldly upon her and accusing her of having deceived him ? No, no ; not that, but—what was she to do ? The woman who hesitates is—what ? and Flora, upright, true, faithful wife as she was, Flora Forrester hesitated.

Sauntering along the centre transept, they became aware of the approaching presence of Lord and Lady St. Clair. Lord St. Clair hobbling in gait, rubicund in face, irascible in temper, as usual. Lady St. Clair, fragile, beautiful, slightly bored, also as usual. Her pretty little ladyship brightened up—transparent little piece of porcelain as she was—wonderfully as her former acquaintances neared her ; and Philip, with a vivid remembrance of how kind she had been to him in former days, and how much he had admired her for her condescending grace, and how much he had pitied her for being tied to such an old brute, sprang to her side and expressed delight vocally and visibly, at once to her trembling gratification and her husband's ill-concealed chagrin.

Flora was glad to see her too, 'pretty little thing ;' Flora had learnt to be exceedingly tolerant of Lady St. Clair since she herself had been such a happy wife ; she had come to have a sort of admiring pity for poor Ida's lot as an un-

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happy one—not that she knew, but that she thought, it must be so. The reserved shaft, therefore, which Horace Greville now let fly, fell harmless. While Philip was, together with the lovely little lady, inhaling the fragrance of some remarkably fine white roses, Horace Greville breathed into the ear of Philip's wife the story of that little episode in the corridor at Kempstowe; he also asked her if she had ever seen the remarkably correct likeness Philip had made of Ida in those days? and offered, if she had not, to show it to her on their return. But in the scornful smile that came over Flora's face as his mellifluous accents fell he read aright that this shaft was harmless, and that he had been wise not to trust to it alone to 'work her.'

And soon they came upon other friends; for, as I said, all London had poured down to the metamorphosed park at Penge on this bright May day. Soon, radiant in spring toilette and fictitious spirits, they came upon Kate Elton, and hardly had the old friends—the possible sisters—exchanged greetings before they were joined by Captain and Mrs. Forrester-Thwaites.

If ever a woman feels a mean but wholly irrepressible triumph, it is when she contrasts herself with the wife of the man she has loved, and who she knows has loved her, and finds that wife palpably wanting. It was not alone to the jaundiced eye of jealousy that Eliza was stamped as an 'inferior article' to the pretty brunette who had suffered such agonies of mind and ankle on Charlie's account at Kempstowe—and ah, *how* often since! This inferiority was a fact patent to the world, and to no portion of that world was it clearer than to Captain Forrester-Thwaites himself.

He could not but feel it; alas! he could not but own it to himself, poor fellow! Gone was the tenderly deprecating look of love from those large brown eyes that had once harassed him so; gone was the pallor of anxiety from her cheeks. Excitement had brightened the brown eyes to the fire of the diamond, and tinged the cheek with the

hue of the crimson rose; excitement, and a little womanly feeling of pleasure that she *was* so much prettier and so much more elegant than her rich, successful rival. In gesture, dress, voice, manner, in all that constitutes a woman charming, Kate Elton was radiant to-day. She had subdued the rebellious rising in her throat which had threatened to choke her on *his* first appearance, and the effort to do so had rendered her tones even softer and more thrilling than of old. Softer and more thrilling! demon of ambition—of such poor paltry ambition—which had made the listening to these tones almost a crime, and the constant hearing of the muddy ones of the apothecary's daughter a duty! She wore her barège shawl like an angel or a Frenchwoman, neither showily, nor dowdily, nor uneasily; his wife, who could not achieve this at all, wore *him* instead of her shawl, if one might judge by the way in which she swathed herself in that garment. Her gloves, too; how was it that while Kate's gloves, of a hue more delicate than silver, if possible, remained freshly pure and undefiled; his wife's took all sorts of dark shades, and 'got blacks' from places where blacks were not? The dragoon's moustache came out of curl with annoyance and mortification. If Kate would only give him one look expressive of sympathy and continued kindly feeling towards 'him, the early dream,' he would take up his cross and bear it manfully amongst the flowers; but Kate would not give him this look. No; after shaking hands with him with indifferent, and with his wife with extreme politeness, Kate Elton appeared to vivaciously forget his existence as she walked on merrily with his sister in front of the party.

She might have been a little unhappy, he thought, on this, their first meeting since his ill-starred marriage; she might have shown to *him*, at least, that 'she appreciated his motives better.' It was not quite clear what this sentiment meant, but it sounded magnanimous and good, and he kept on repeating it to himself as he walked behind

with his wife until he got to believe in it.

Mrs. Forrester-Thwaites was not much happier or more at her ease on this occasion than was her liege lord. She was with them, but not of them; and she felt this as keenly as the most delicately-organized and finely-sensitive daughter of a hundred earls might have done. The most they accorded her was pitying good-nature. Philip Morton and Flora were always cordial and kind; but the cordial kindness never amounted to cordial friendship; for Horace Greville she scarcely existed; Lady St. Clair, when she did speak to her, always permitted her own blue eyes to droop languidly upon Mrs. Forrester-Thwaites's hands, thereby making the latter feel extra uncomfortable; while Kate Elton, Mrs. Forrester-Thwaites acknowledged to herself, she could not abide. Charlie's manner to her, too, she thought, with some justice, might have been more pleasant: he need not have gone into such morose depths in the public way he did, proclaiming to all the world, and to the hated 'old love,' that happiness was not reigning in his heart. In her humility she was always ready to acknowledge her inferiority of mind, manners, and—no, not estate, but personal charms, to him and to his beautiful sister; but to have him showing that he felt it, and expected her to feel it, with reference to Kate Elton, was 'too much,' she thought, bitterly. She had endowed him unreservedly with all she had, and he had been glad to take her property; but her love, *that* he had never been able to disguise effectually, he could have dispensed with. Eliza Thwaites had taught herself to bow meekly under the weight of this last crushing truth, to accept the situation and make the best of it; but she writhed under its displayal before the eyes of the girl whose presence still could call a burning flush to the brow of her husband. There was more than one aching heart in that gay group of re-united friends, but not one that ached with so sore an anguish as did that of the despised wife.

With a jealous dread that she, poor thing, could not conceal from him, she watched piteously, whenever he did address Kate, for the glances that should tell her that the same warm feelings still lived. Kate's haughty reticence struck her as being assumed to mislead *her* alone, not as being the natural result of the reaction that she might have thought had taken place in the girl's mind. She looked on doubtfully when he was talking to his sister even; for was not Flora, Kate's friend? might they not be—? She knew not what to accuse them of in her helpless, unshared, sorrowful distrust of herself and her husband.

But the conversation the brother and sister held hurriedly apart for a few minutes bore no relation to the subject of *her* fears. Naturally, in her doubt and difficulty, Flora turned to her brother for assistance, with the sure feeling that from him it would be obtained. Mrs. Morton made him master of the subject in a few words—as much of it as she intended him to know at present; that is, 'Charlie,' she said, 'I want you to lend me some money to-morrow without anybody knowing it. I may pay you some time or other, or I may not; if I can, I will: now, will you do it?'

'Certainly; but, my dear Flo, what is this? You, of all women in the world, to be wanting money without your husband's knowledge. Surely Philip—'

'Is all that is good and generous, Charlie,' she hastily interrupted. 'I know all you think and all you must feel; but I am sure you won't be angry with me, or think I am wrong, when I tell you why Philip must not know of it. I will go up to your house to-morrow, Charlie, and tell you all about it.'

He did not say anything, but she could see that he was relieved by her promise to 'tell him all about it.' Presently he said, speaking very low and almost sadly, 'Flo, there's one little favour you can do me, dear, if you will.' He paused, and when she had asked him 'what,' he went on rapidly, burying his face in his handkerchief as he spoke, so

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that she could not see its expression. 'Just discover, if you can, whether Miss Elton is going to throw herself away as report says. I know I have no right to ask, or to be interested, or any thing of that sort; but, Flo, he is not worthy of her; he is not, indeed: persuade her from it.'

Flora shook her head. 'I will try, Charles, in this case, for *I*, too, do not think him worthy of her. I am sure I wish rather that it was some one whom I could persuade her to marry; for Kate has altered, grown colder and harder, poor child, and—well, it would be well for all parties, I think, if she were married.'

'Heaven knows she can't have suffered more than I have,' said Captain Forrester, moodily; and then, their conference over, the brother and sister rejoined the others. Later in the day Flora did, softly and cautiously, put that question, that Charlie had suggested, to Kate. Her answer was a haughty denial of the report; and then, with a quick change of manner, a laughing assurance that Flora might tell her brother she was 'still wearing

the willow for him.' Kate made the assertion daringly, in order to impress Flora with an idea of how utterly improbable it was; but Flora looked beyond the first turning, and sighed that it should be so.

That May day, amongst the flowers at Sydenham, was not such a brilliant success after all for those with whom I have to deal.

The next morning Flora went to town; and though Charlie scoffed at her foolish fears, he promised to respect her confidence; and she felt all the happier now her brother shared her secret. 'I shall go home with you, Flo,' he said, 'and *I* shall hand the money to that fellow, or he will annoy you in the future; and when you give me leave, I will tell your husband how it came about; for, believe me, you won't feel free and comfortable until he knows.' But Flora so earnestly begged that he never would 'tell,' that Charlie, in his own mind, began to regard Mr. Morton as a modern Blue-beard. It was the morning following this day that Sir Ulric Lyster learned that Saint Kevin's purchase-money was placed to his credit.



A HOLIDAY AT 'THE PAINTERS' REST.'

North Wales.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

IF the limner's art has no other advantage over certain professions (usually considered by Mrs. Grundy to be more respectable), it certainly has this—that he may leave this 'dear distracting town' at the close of the season, wander whither he likes, having no fear of a 'business letter' or 'sudden call home' before his eyes, and unattended by any weight, save that which his knapsack and camp stool may impose. He has no scruples on the score of neglected duties, but carries his profession with him, combines his practice with recreation, and sets up shop where others are idling. While Dr. Glibb is nodding in semi-somnolency over medical memoranda in his circular fronted brougham, after having been up with Lady Olivia Branchley all night, and on his way to Mrs. Quiverfull's annual case; while Mr. Tangler goes into that suit of 'Growl v. Snarling' in the back office at Hatton Garden, Tom Stippler's business leads him, with a light heart and sunburnt face, over heathery down, or causes him to pitch his canvas tent by the banks of a salmon weir.

Of course each occupation is good in its way, and in point of profit, a lawyer or physician in good practice will pocket many more guineas than fall to the share of their artistic brethren; but if good air and exercise, an easy life and excellent digestion are to be thrown into the scale, give me, I say, the painter's lot. A Hansom cab will serve my turn as well as the latest novelty from Long Acre, and bearing in mind the story of Master Reynard and the Grapes, I prefer a cottage at Blackheath to a house in Belgrave Square.

It is in the latter fashionable quarter that Richard Dewberry, Esq., of the Middle Temple, London, resides when he is at home, which, to do him justice, is very rarely. The consumption of a certain number of

dinners in the society of his *confrères*, the payment of certain fees, and Mr. Bobwig's little bill for a horse-hair head-dress and flowing robe, have constituted him a full-blown English barrister, and he wants but a brief or two to make him the happiest of men.

Not that the absence of even these documents has any serious effect on his spirits. Why should it? Having some six hundred a year of his own, and as much more in prospect, R. D. can afford to look dispassionately on the future, and cultivate the attorneys or not as he pleases. He goes down to his chambers with the greatest perseverance every morning. I have lunched there frequently, and pronounce his salads unexceptionable. What then? Shall we spoil their flavour with wretched pigakin or crown the bowl with garlands of red tape? Faugh! It would be like the harpies which Virgil describes descending on a classic banquet. Long live the briefless one, I say, so long as he has an income to live upon.

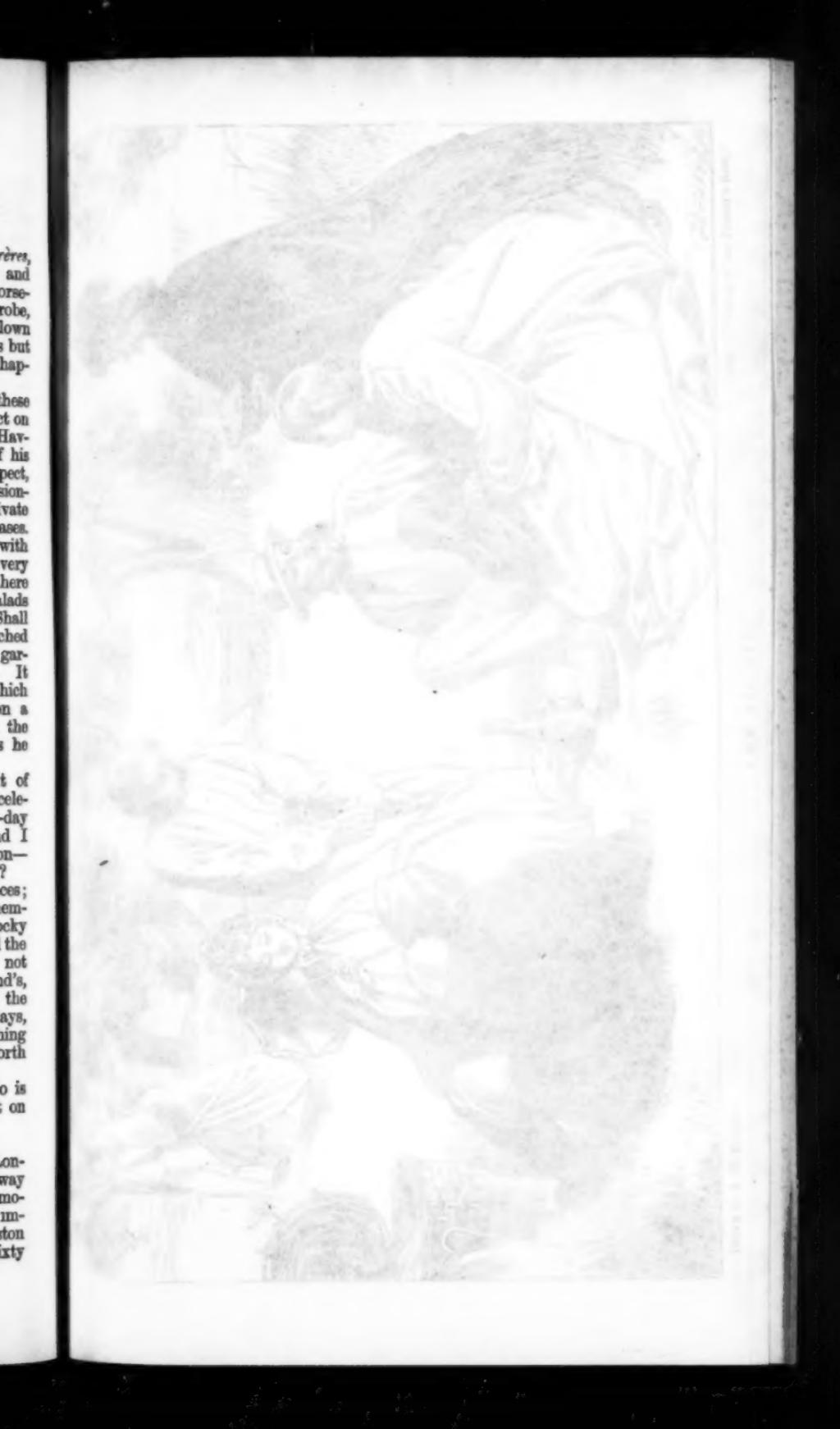
It was at the commencement of the long vacation, and after celebrating one of the aforesaid mid-day repasts, that Mr. Dewberry and I discussed the important question—Where shall we go this autumn?

Of course, numberless places; routes and tours suggested themselves in turn. Paris, the Rocky Mountains, St. Petersburgh, and the Levant; but since my purse is not quite so long as my legal friend's, and we had seen a good deal of the Continent together in former days, I felt inclined to do a little sketching in a quiet way and proposed North Wales.

'Capital idea!' cries Dick, who is a man of few words; 'we'll start on Monday.'

And so we did.

Our railway journey from London was as interesting as railway journeys usually are. From the moment that we passed under that imposing Greek portico at the Euston Station, which they say cost sixty





See "A Holiday at the Painter's Ranch."

THE PIC-NIC.

Drawn by A. W. Cooper.

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thousand pounds and will not shelter a cab from the rain, until we arrived at Conway, nothing of any moment occurred. We looked at as much of the roadside scenery as the dust would allow, and were nearly missing our carriage at Chester in consequence of the train being split up into infinitesimal portions, all of which appeared to leave the platform in different ways, and concerning whose respective destinations none of the porters or policemen seemed to have the wildest idea. Having, however, recognized our carriage, which by some fortunate mistake proceeded on our road, we reached Conway at last; and having tossed up between the merits of the Castle Inn and the 'Erskine Arms,' and persuaded the representatives of the latter hostelry that we could not engage a separate room for our railway wrappers and umbrellas there, while we were staying at the other hotel, we were permitted to reclaim those articles which the 'Erskine Arms' (and hands) were carrying off.

Before inspecting the ancient bulwarks of Conway, we discussed such fortifications as the Castle Inn contained, in the shape of some capital salmon and roast lamb, and after dissuading Dewberry from ordering a Welsh rarebit (which he thought was a national dish) I sallied out with him to look at the old town. A queer old town it is, to be sure, built on all sorts of irregular slopes intersecting each other at incredible angles. There is a sort of continental air about the place. You have seen something like it at Viterbo, or catch a glimpse which reminds you of Auxerre, and yet it has one or two family features in common with Chester. There is the *Plas Mawr*—a battered old mansion of the sixteenth century—and a number of timber houses built about the same date. At their doors stand gossiping, picturesque old crones with their bonnets tilted forward on the head (a common fashion here); and now and then we come upon a curious specimen of the old beaver hat and nightcap—that wondrous coiffure—once so associated with the ladies of Taffy-land.

Whether the peasantry of the

VOL. II.—NO. IX.

place are below the average in height or their appetites unusually great, I cannot say; but this I know, that the largest loaf I ever saw was carried out of the smallest door I ever entered, that evening at Conway.

There is a monumental stone in the church (which we did *not* go to see) in memory of one Nicholas Hooker, of Conway, Gent., who was the forty-first child of his father, and considering the population of the place is under 2,000, it would be a curious investigation for the Statistical Society to ascertain what proportion of the community derive their origin from this prolific Welshman.

'Conway Castle was erected' (according to our handbook, on which we mainly rely for our dates), 'in 1284, by Edward I., as a security against Welsh insurrection; commanding the pass of Penmaen-mawr, which then formed, as it now does, the road to Snowdon and Anglesey. When in its perfect state, it must have been one of the most magnificent fortresses of Britain. Pennant says, one more beautiful never arose.' And certainly, as a ruin, it is the most picturesque and romantic that I have ever seen. We strolled at sunset through its grand old archways on which the ivy has crawled and grappled for ages past; peered into gloomy vaults where perhaps, six centuries ago, the prisoners of bold Longshanks lay in terror of the gibbet; entered the area of that lordly hall where he feasted with his nobles; walked on the summit of those stout old walls which have echoed alike with the sound of revelry and shout of battle; looked down on the river Conway flowing swiftly on towards the Irish Sea; and then—*mirabile dictu!*—recollected that we had driven along the New Road in a hackney cab that very morning.

This sudden bathos from our romantic reflection was induced, I must confess, by the sight of the tubular railway bridge which, whatever its merits may be as a specimen of engineering, is certainly the ugliest object I ever saw interfere with landscape. Can nothing be

done with constructive science now, but must be hideous? Is that vile oblong box of iron plates the only practicable form which could have been adopted? I, for one, will not believe it. Away with that cant about the nineteenth century and the impossibility of combining use and beauty in our modern forges. The masons who raised this noble fortress were artists in their way. The military skill which planned the moat and reared the watch towers, and splayed the loops of Conway Castle, could appreciate the delicacy of carved boss and mullioned window where each was wanted. Machicolations were not only designed that ladies might sketch their graceful shapes with an H. B. pencil, but because the arrow which sped from behind them might do its work more surely. Light entered where there was need for light, buttress rose where strength required it. If there was no sham sentiment on the one hand, there was no ugly utilitarianism on the other in the work of those days. Some people think that because mediæval dwelling-houses had small windows, their inmates must have been gloomy. Do they remember when glass was first used and what it cost in those days? And do they suppose that railway bridges and steam engines and electric telegraphs are not compatible with the purest principles of art?

A few hundred years ago, when labour was cheap and timber plenty, the great iron spirit was not summoned because we could do without him. But where metal *was* used, it was wrought with wondrous cunning and artistic skill. There was Quentin Matsys for instance; he was a good workman and could wield a hammer, I warrant, with any blacksmith of his time: I look at his famous pump in Antwerp city, and learn that in *those* days science and art went hand and hand.

* * * * *

The most satisfactory point about these ruins is that they are simply left as ruins. There is no attempt to cockneyfy them by the establishment of trim gardens or officious guides. The modest fee of three-

pence will enable visitors to ramble where they like, without being bored by the hackneyed jargon of a cicerone. The remains of Glastonbury Abbey are kept so spruce and snug, in a trim close-shaven lawn, that they afford no subject of picturesque interest, save that which finds its place in a lady's album. *Here*, with the exception of a rail now and then to prevent rash tourists from falling through a broken vault, everything has been left as it was by the hand of that ruthless Earl of Conway, who, in 1665, caused the fortress to be dismantled in order to afford material for the repair of his Irish estates. A painter might spend months in illustrating the castle alone.

I roused Mr. Dick up betimes the next morning in order to catch the Llanberis coach, and great was his wrath when that vehicle drew up, full to repletion of passengers and luggage from the off box seat to the inmost recesses of the boots.

'We might have known this,' grumbled that gentleman; 'a pretty courier *you* are. What was the use of waking a fellow up in the middle of the night' (only 7 A.M., upon my honour) 'and making him bolt his breakfast for nothing? We shall have to post it after all.'

And so, forsooth, it turned out, and I mention the fact as a solemn warning to all British tourists in September. Unless your places are booked beforehand—*lasciate ogni speranza*—give up all hope of room in a Welsh stage-coach. What with packing Dick's portmanteau and his portable (?) sketching apparatus (including all the latest inventions calculated to impede the artist) from Rathbone Place, and his 'tient-tout' bag, and his hat-box, and his sponge-bath, and shower-bath, it was 11 A.M. before we got under weigh, and the extent of the above-mentioned paraphernalia occupied such space in the little trap which we hired, that the driver had to ride postillion to give us sitting room. A magnificent appearance he presented, certainly, in his round jacket and corduroys, his well brushed castor and jack-boots. His buttons were a little tarnished, it is true, and indications

of copper appeared here and there under the silver wash. His hat, too, might have carried a trifle more nap with advantage, and his steeds were not quite so well groomed as those which stand by the portal of St. George's, Hanover Square, upon a bridal morning. Still he was a postilion, there was no doubt of that, born of that great family which seem by nature intended for the stable. Of the turf, turf, he wore a sporting air which was unmistakable. If he could read, depend on it he had acquired that accomplishment by spelling over the columns of 'Bell's Life.' Had he a shilling to spare, it would have been invested with one of those precarious 'prophets' whose 'tip' is considered so invaluable. I think I see the honest fellow laying odds on the issue of a forthcoming 'event.' Surely, if 'poeta nascitur' be a truthful adage, if youthful rhymers lisp their numbers in a nursery, there can be little doubt about the predisposition of a post-boy.

The road to Bôn y Dyffryn lies through the charming valley of the Conway, skirting at some parts the river itself as it dashes through rugged channels of moss-covered rock or leaps over boulders of stone half sunken in its bed—sometimes running notchwise along the hill-side beneath the shade of lofty pine trees, anon breaking out upon the fresh and open moor where purple heather and yellow gorse are relieved upon a ground of mossy grass. Here and there we come upon a mountain stream descending in rapid falls from its source above, and bounding from crag to crag until it joins the river in a cloud of snow-white spray. And far off, half hidden by the grey morning mist, lie Moel Siabod and the mountains of Snowdonia.

Mr. Dewberry was in rapture at the landscape. 'Never saw anything like it, upon my word, now,' cries the enthusiastic youth. 'Beats the Tyrol, beats the Rhine, beats the Campagna. I tell you what it is, Jack, we Englishmen are great muffs to cross the Channel when we can get such scenery as this at home.' And here, pulling out an elegant little

morocco case, R. D. produces the chapest of briar-root pipes, which he fills with choice Latakia—the consumption of which herb he seems to consider indispensable to a just appreciation of the beauties of Nature.

Presently a turn in the road brings us in sight of a small and scattered village, from a few roofs of which, relieved against the copse behind, rise thin blue jets of smoke straight up into the evening air. We cross the river on a sturdy bridge of rough-hewn stone, and roll along the turnpike road until our rustic Jehu pulls up beside a well-built, gabled inn, with old-fashioned cosy windows peeping out of clematis and jessamine. There is an ample ivy-covered porch in front, and dangling above it in mid-air there hangs a venerable sign. When I say a sign, I don't mean one of your fashionable modern conventionalities, adorned with shaded letters and gilt flourishes, but a real picture, painted on substantial panel, on which, lest there should be the slightest doubt regarding its significance, this legend runs—

THE PAINTERS' REST.

It represents a gentleman of that profession, with a knapsack on his back, and a portfolio under his arm, regaling himself with a glass of beer at the hostelry in question, with a background of very blue mountains. It is supposed to have been the work of, and a present from, an inmate of the hotel in the early part of this century, who was prevented by untoward circumstances from settling his account at the end of a month's sojourn, and took this means of relieving himself from any sense of obligation to the landlord of the period.

It is not difficult to prognosticate the general character of an inn from the reception which you meet with on arrival. When an obsequious gentleman in a white tie presents himself, rubbing his hands and making endless inquiries as to the nature of the accommodation which you want; when a sulky hostess, in a black cap and mittens, surveys you doubtfully from head to foot,

and pronounces the word 'yes' in answer to your questions, so as to sound as much like a negative as possible—these, I say, are bad symptoms; but we augured well from the first aspect of the 'Painters' Rest.' A stout and smiling landlady, a pretty barmaid, an active, civil 'boots,' neat little maids bustling about in the most coquettish of caps and cap-ribbons, diving down wondrous little passages and returning laden with tempting comestibles, all lent an air of comfort and hospitality to this establishment suggestive of the time when an inn was a really welcome resting-place for travellers, and not a magnificent spunging-house for fleecing 'swells.'

A few days soon made us familiar with the *genius loci* at Dyffryn. A few walks confirmed us in the belief that it is indeed the *cor cordium* of North Wales; and a few letters exchanged with my fair cousins (in which excursions, pic-nics, and sketching-parties were duly proposed and planned with remarkable disregard to the chance of weather) induced them to join us about a week after our arrival. It was during this interval that Mr. Dick had an opportunity of seeing something of the picturesque side of artists' life, with which he declared he was now more charmed than ever; and began to throw out sundry hints that he had mistaken his profession—spoke in the most disrespectful terms of English jurisprudence as a study—and asked me how I supposed that a man with an eye for colour could bear to spend the best part of his days in Mitre Court with no better prospect than a dingy brick wall from his window, and three briefs a year from Messrs. Quibbler and Jarman.

To this *argumentum ad misericordiam* I confess I replied in cautious terms; for the fact is that, as a rule, the studies of my *confrères* at Dyffryn stood in about the same relation to a painter's regular occupation as the scenery in Guillaume Tell does to real life in Switzerland. The professional gentlemen in this delightful retreat rise, say between eight and nine on a fine autumnal

morning. An elaborate breakfast awaits them, which, setting apart an hour or so for a pipe and the process of digestion, will carry them on till nearly mid-day. It is then that Mr. Stippler and his associates may be seen emerging in twos and threes from the 'Painters' Rest,' and wending their way in gay companionship to the various points of interest which they choose to illustrate; sometimes to the beauties of some rocky pass and waterfall; sometimes to the shores of a mountain llyn, which mirrors on its surface the glowing colour of the hills beyond; now and then penetrating the depths of a wooded glen to study nature in a 'chequered shade.' In these sequestered spots they work and smoke and chat by turns, leaving black care and tailors' bills behind them in Soho, until dark November warns them home, and the Academy schools re-open. But now and then a cricket-match, a game of quoits, or angling-rod beguiles them into meadow-land or down the river; and I have known some of these youthful Titians spend an afternoon quite happily, *sub tegmine fagi*, with no other companion than Mr. Punch and the Saturday Reviewers.

At six o'clock P.M., after the labours of the day, we meet together in the coffee-room to discuss the generous feast which our landlady has provided. There is not much variety in that rural feast, it is true. If on Mondays we feed on salmon, lamb, and roast duck, the same hour on Tuesday night sees us before roast duck, and lamb, and salmon. But this fact, it must be confessed, interferes but little with our appetite, which, to quote the words of the immortal bard, 'is good, and on which digestion duly waits.' Ah! 'fames optimum condimentum!' when a man has worked, and is hungry, he does not care for sauce piquante. The wines of Rhineland and Burgundy are rarely called for at our banquet, but I recommend the bitter ale to all connoisseurs of that pleasant tonic. In former days, when the 'Rest' was a small roadside inn, and Dyffryn rarely visited, except by artists, those gentlemen composed a little oligarchy, to inter-

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fe with whose prerogative was treason. They dined, dressed, and talked when, how, and in what strain they pleased. If an unfortunate British tourist, or wretched bagman, chanced to enter their domain, his appearance was the signal for a general onset. It was like the tailless fox among his brother Reynards. No mercy, no quarter was shown him; and after being coughed down, or treated with silent contempt, he had no choice but to retreat ignominiously to bed. Happily that conservative epoch has passed away; and, with the increased size of the hotel, let us hope the painters' hearts have expanded. Tourists of both sexes now appear at the table d'hôte, and the conversation is no longer limited to 'shop.' Nay, even in the bar itself—that sanctum sanctorum of our fraternity—Mr. Dewberry was always welcome, and joined in the discussions of Ruskin's theory and Turner's practice as if he had been familiar with their works from his earliest youth. A little art-slang judiciously introduced in small-talk will often have the effect of conveying an idea of connoisseurship to the uninitiated; and it is astonishing how soon Dick began to talk of 'half tones' and 'middle tints,' 'glazing,' 'scumbling,' and many other processes of which, I fear, he knew but very little. Indeed Wagsby, the painter (and brother to the facetious captain of that name), who never loses an opportunity for a pun, congratulated him on his success at the *bar*, and Mr. Dewberry took the joke with his usual good nature. Tremendous controversies, to be sure, were carried on in that little temple of Bacchus, where Stippler took the chair, *nem. con.*, every evening at nine P.M., and where quarts of grog were nightly imbibed. Swigley, the well-known delineator of river scenery and cascades of this neighbourhood, here counteracted, by a proportionate quantity of whiskey, the injurious effects which he declared would be the result of sitting so long by the waterfall that he was studying, and gravely informed us how long experience had taught him the neces-

sity of alcoholic stimulant under such circumstances.

'I'll tell ye what it is, old feller,' remarked Mr. S. to the chairman one evening when we were assembled, 'this 'ere climate is not to be trifled with. What I say is, whenever you feel anything coming on, *liquor up*—that's *my* advice. Of course, when you're in a fair and open country—as it might be here—where there's a good tap at hand—why a glass o' beer's the thing to set you going; and if you're sketching down at the river side, and such-like places, you should take a nip of brandy now and then; but for a real splash-dash sort of a hole like the Rhaydr Hén, there's nothin' like a stiff, hot glass of whisky-toddy ev'ry arf hour or so, to keep out the wet. Why, sir, I was penting there the autumn before last, before I knew anything of the climate, and took nothing but bottled ale. I had a bottle brought to me after I got in my outline—another bottle for the light and shade—another for the sky—another for the middle distance—another for the foreground—*quart* bottles, mind you—and yet, would you believe it? I was taken so bad down there I could scarcely walk when I got up; so I asked that there medical chap as comes here sometimes what he thought about it, and he says to me, says he, "Swigley," he says, "I know your case," he says; "what you want when you're penting them subjects is diffusible stimulants," he says.

'Stimulants, doctor!' says I; "why I had four quarts of beer, and—"

'Beer,' says he, contemptuous like, "what's beer down in a place like the Rhaydr Hén? Why, it does you more harm than good," he says. "No, Swigley, my boy," says he, "take your alcohol," he says, "in a more condensed form," he says, "and hot," he says, "is *my* advice; and if you'll just step into the bar," he says, "I'll show you what I mean."

'So we did, and he had something "short," which I paid for; and I kep' his advice ever since; and whenever I go into the Rhaydr Hén, or any of those damp places, I take and fill my pocket-flask with Irish

whiskey, and they boil me some water at the nearest cottage, and bring it down to my tent, about ev'ry 'arf hour, quite pleasant.'

With such harmless prattle as this does Mr. Swigley occasionally entertain us, when Stippler, the P.R.B., and Slopson, the amateur, allow a few minutes' pause in their discussion on the treatment of backgrounds. Fiercely these youths have been contending for their respective schools—the one on the side of patience and fidelity, the other, of vigorous and rapid drawing, in their work. One wants to paint the whole range of Cambrian hills in one great sweep of the brush; the other would linger for weeks before a hedge-row. For my part, I sympathize with both their aims, and devoutly wish that men of opposite creeds in Art, Philosophy, Politics, Religion—what you will—would feel how much they teach and learn by holding opposite opinions. Suppose that Jones and I agreed entirely on the merits of the poet Close or Tennyson—sided with North against South, or *vice versa*, in the American question—and each liked the same end of a fried sole—don't you see how we might be mutually encouraged in hopeless bigotry, to say nothing of spoiling our little dinner? '*De gustibus non disputandum*,' I translate, 'Be thankful that your neighbour differs from you.' So, when the Goddess of Discord throws her pipkin down, let us fall a scrambling for the precious fruit, and be sure—whoever gets it—we shall all be better for the struggle.

When these gentlemen are not amiably quarrelling over their *petteles*, they call on each other for a song, or sit down to a game of chess. If the evening is a fine one (and they come but rarely in North Wales), there is a field hard by the inn, where some of us assemble to play at quoits or cricket. I have even known the game of leap frog introduced, and once found Mr. Dick flying over the back of an undergraduate, as if the sport had been an ordinary recreation in the Temple Gardens and Christchurch meadows. The university men who come down here with an intention of reading—

the London dandies who pretend to fish, forget their little dignities in this Arcadia, and mingle freely with the students of 'paysage.' It is a small, well-organized republic, our little community at Dyrifryn, where universal suffrage obtains, and freedom of discussion is allowed. Our wideawakes are caps of liberty—the growth of beards is not interdicted—we smoke the pipe of peace together, and dwell in perfect unity.

I think our friends grew a little jealous when the Miss Winsomes arrived, armed with 'alpen-stocks' and sketch books and butterfly nets, and botanizing spades, and carried us off on their various expeditions. 'You never come down to quoits now, old chap,' grumbles out Mr. Swigley: 'you and Dooberry are always out with them gals. Thank goodness, I've got no cousins to come bothering about the place,' &c. Nor was it at all easy to escape the scorn of those ladies when we absented ourselves from their tea-table to rally round our chairman at the 'Painters' Rest.'

'Can't you get on *one* evening without your pipe?' Miss Rose exclaims to me, as I take leave of her outside the cottage door (as if we had not been gossiping with them for the last four blessed nights); 'very well, sir; go to your tobacco and your beer, your long-haired geniuses and midnight orgies, and when you weary of those delights come here again and drink your souchong.'

A great many cups of that delicious beverage we imbibed in the society of these ladies—a number of pleasant walks we had together—Mr. Dewberry pairing off with Miss Laura, and affecting the deepest interest in her botanical pursuits; fording streams and climbing into all sorts of perilous places to gather heath and mosses for her basket. It was astonishing to see the assiduity with which this gentleman began to cultivate acquaintance with British ferns—described caudex and rhizome, fronds and venation with great gravity, and once sent me into fits of laughter by announcing that he had found a *Polypodium Phegopteris*, and was going to carry it home to my cousin.

Not being of a scientific turn herself, Miss Rose was pleased to select me as her companion in our pedestrian excursions; and if my revered uncle, whose gout seemed rather troublesome, did not always accompany us, it was a loss which we learnt to bear with resignation.

Sometimes we hired a trap, and drove to the various points of interest in the neighbourhood; and once Mr. Dewberry undertook to organize a boating party and picnic at Llyn Geirionydd, whereby he had an excellent opportunity, first of displaying his skill as an oarsman before the ladies, and secondly, of indulging his taste for lobster salad to no small extent.

A picturesque group I have no doubt we formed, lying about on the pleasant mossy shore, with the boats moored in the distance, and Dick in his shirt-sleeves busy with the wine bottles.

We have all read that story in the 'Arabian Nights' about the stupendous Jinn that emerged from a flask and grew like a mountain before the astonished fisherman who had unconsciously liberated him from his prison. I think it was Madame

Clicquot herself, in the form of a Muse, who appeared before us as the champagne corks flew off on this occasion. Under the influence of that gentle stimulant, the ladies gracefully complied with our request that they would sing, and my fair cousins, whose voices sound very well together, kindly favoured us with several duets of a romantic nature and melodious strain.

All this was pleasant enough to be sure, and suited Mr. Richard admirably, but as far as sketching was concerned, we might as well have left our blocks, canvases, and colour boxes in Soho, for any work we did at Dyffryn. Day after day some new scheme was proposed—some fresh expedition planned, in which we were expected to take a part, and if the Academy Exhibition suffers next season in consequence, I know whose fault it will be.

Perhaps our greatest achievement was the ascent of Snowdon, which, as it is usually looked upon as a formidable undertaking, I shall describe, with your permission, in another letter.

JACK EASEL.



‘A LITTLE MISTAKE.’

A ROMANCE OF THE BROMPTON EXHIBITION.

IT was a ‘half-crown day’ at the International Exhibition, and a crowd was collected round the grand piano under the western dome, which was heard to the greatest advantage, under the dexterous manipulation of a young performer, who was evidently a mistress of her art.

It was, however, evident to the most careless observer, that the attraction consisted not so much in the exquisite harmony which she had at her fingers’ ends, as in the beauty of the lovely face, from which both ‘mind and music breathed,’ and which levied the tax of admiration from all beholders. There is no rule so despotic as that of beauty, which counts the number of its subjects in the number of human eyes by which chance or intention surround its throne.

The fortunate possessor of so many of Nature’s best gifts, was well protected against any annoying manifestation of intrusive admiration, by the presence of a ‘dragon of prudery placed within call,’ in the person of an elderly duenna, who, seated in front of the populace, on a chair, on which a ticket with the mysterious words, ‘No. 2,’ had been accidentally hung, appeared to defy the public, by means of this mystic symbol, to approach the goddess of the hour; and to remind it in warning tones that if Sybil No. 1, attracted too much individual attention or admiration, that the eye of No. 2 may be expected to take speedy and disapproving cognizance of the fact.

An old and a young man were also in attendance; the elderly man being of the thoroughly English type, the younger one evidently a foreigner, ugly to excess, notwithstanding the redeeming splendour of a pair of essentially southern eyes. From these lugubrious orbs he threw, on the occasion in question, glances of jealous inquiry among the assembled crowd; while the elder man, evidently fully convinced that the native dignity of his beautiful child was her best protection, and to

whom the noble appeal of ‘trust me’ would not have been made in vain, stood calmly surveying the admiring audience, occasionally interchanging observations with his excitable companion, who, when Sybil executed some of her most delectable passages, looked, as the Persians say, as if his soul had swooned away, and floated to heaven on the breath of those subtle sounds.

There were, however, other listeners, of less ethereal stamp, and one colossal specimen of the sight-seeing British agriculturist, exclaimed in a loud voice, and evidently with intense appreciation of the exquisite humour of his remark—

‘I wish that good lady’s fingers would get tired.’

Perhaps some of the readers of ‘London Society’ may, like ourselves, have been eye and ear witnesses of that fearful corporeal development, and of those harsh, trumpet-like tones; if so they must have rejoiced with us in the discomfiture of the mammoth Philistine, who, instead of being encouraged with the applause which he evidently expected, immediately became the cynosure (as the newspapers have it) of such glances of unfeigned disgust, that, if human eyes ever possessed the basilisk power to look a ‘fellow creature down,’ which a poetess has ascribed to them, that British agriculturist would have been laid low in the dust, under the raking fire which opened upon him from all quarters.

The young artiste herself heard the delicately worded remark; and the smile which, in consequence, rippled on her lips, showed that she was not insensible to the perception of the ridiculous, although none better than she could soar to the heights of the sublime.

It behoves us now to put the reader in possession of the history of this enchantress and her attendant satellites—the dignified elder, the excitable Signor, and the mysterious ‘No. 2,’ who sits so grimly, with the suggestive symbol on her

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back, exciting the merriment of the crowd.

The lady, the elder, and No. 2, then, form one family and household: for No. 2 (hight 'Nelly' in familiar parlance), occupies the position of confidential servant and adviser-general in the small circle, to whose magic limits the excitable Signor is, as may be supposed from the former remarks, most anxious to be admitted. In order to attain the desired end he has opened a battery of compliments, cajoleries, and bribes upon fortress No. 2, which shows, however, not the remotest sign of capitulation, and whose vulnerable point has not as yet been discovered.

The Signorina herself has likewise proved insensible to the passion of her foreign admirer, who is not so well acquainted with the manners and customs of the British barbarian, on matters connected with courtship and matrimony, that he should despair of success upon that score alone. If the 'Signor Papa' and the 'Signora Duenna' would but give him encouragement, he had little doubt but that the golden-haired English Signorina would eventually smile upon his suit, urged in the mellow accents of his native tongue. The 'Signor Papa,' he fondly imagined, was already on his side: he mistook the security of confidence, which allowed him constant access to the society of his daughter, for acquiescence in the probable results; for who could approach the divine Sybilla, and remain indifferent to her wonderful fascinations? Who could resist the harmony both of sight and sound, which her beauty and her talents threw like a halo round her? Not, assuredly, one of southern blood—that blood which leaps to the worship of the beautiful, in whatever shape it presents itself; and that, in its strong and passionate appreciation of all that can move the soul, etherealizes the very senses, of which it is the servant and the slave.

The Italian loved Sybil Vaughan as an Italian loves—with that anomalous love which, seen in one light, is the essence of self-devotion, and in another the essence of selfishness. It is the essence of self-devotion, in that it is content in being allowed to

worship; in that it despairs the morbid self-consciousness, which makes a man measure out every demonstration of the passion which he entertains for a woman, in exact proportion with the amount of affection which she condescends to lavish upon himself; in that it despairs the subtleties, and the backwardness, and the niggardliness (so to speak) of a calmer affection, and elevates its recipient to the rank of a princess of the blood royal, whose service it is an honour to proclaim before the world. It is the essence of selfishness, in that it would sacrifice every individual feeling of the object so ardently beloved, to obtain the right of exclusive worship. That it would hunt its prey, if need be, to the very death, and rather secure for its own possession the lifeless body than that it should pass living and happy into the keeping of another.

The heroine of the hour, and of my story, was so perfectly indifferent to the devotion of her passionate adorer, that she had not realized its depth or extent. Indeed, for so beautiful a girl, she was singularly unpractised in the art of coquetry, and let the weapons of warfare grow rusty for want of use, which in more ambitious hands would have done reckless, although not thoughtless, execution. She was, perhaps, almost unnaturally staid in her manner and appearance, considering her age, for she was not more than two-and-twenty; and her manners gave one the idea more of a young wife than of a young unmarried girl. This circumstance, indeed, was remarked by some of the crowd collected round the piano, who speculated upon the antecedents of the young musician, who had not hitherto appeared before a London audience, but whose nerve and vigour of execution, did not seem to be affected by any ill-timed *mauvaise honte*.

'That ugly little foreign swell's her husband, I suppose,' said one effete dandy to another, who clung to his companion's arm, with the affectionate tenacity which inspires smart young men in public places, who seem to imagine that thus linked they can defy the universe, and make criticism herself hide her head abashed.

'She has no wedding-ring though,' said the dandy double. 'I have made out that, although her fingers twinkle at such an awful pace; and it's a stiffish country to ride over too, with plenty of demisemiquaver fences, as Minnie's governess used to call those long-tailed crotchetts.'

'What a lovely face she has!' said a fashionable woman, always on the look-out for fresh and striking attractions for her musical *réunions*. 'I must find out who she is, and secure her for my next night.'

'What a divine musician!' said a young and interesting-looking man, with an unmistakeably high-bred air, and the modulated voice which generally accompanies a faultless ear.

Low as were the tones in which he spoke, they would seem to have reached the ear of the pianiste, for she glanced suddenly in the direction from which they came, and as her eyes encountered those of the speaker a sudden blush suffused her face, her nerve and self-possession forsook her, her memory failed her, and with an appealing and pitiful glance towards the sympathizing crowd, she suddenly ceased playing, and said hurriedly, in an under tone, to No. 2—

'My music; give me my music.'

No. 2's movements were, however, impeded rather than otherwise by her evident haste to comply with the young lady's desire. The roll of music, so seldom required by one whose memory was as true as her execution was perfect, was not forthcoming so speedily as the occasion required; and the painful confusion of the favourite of the hour awoke the sympathy and compassion of her audience, more particularly of the male part of it, so that murmurs of 'no more,' 'she is not well,' 'it's a deuced shame,' &c., only made her the more anxious to fulfil her engagement to the very last note.

She soon recovered from her overwhelming confusion, and turning rapidly over her music, she selected the simple Irish air, 'The Last Rose of Summer,' for her next performance, which, in this case, involved intricate and tortuous variations, from which her dainty fingers disentangled the harmony with exquisite delicacy

and finish, so that every note told home. Indeed, if it had been the intention and wish of the performer to play upon the very heartstrings of some one then present, she could not have thrown more pathos or more soul into her music.

The jealous eye of the Italian, sought fiercely among the crowd, for the cause of Sybil's confusion, and, with the instinct of jealousy, settled at once upon the right object. There, unmoved and apparently unconscious, stood the author of her break-down and consequent annoyance; indeed, so little did he seem affected by it, that his was one of the few male voices which remained silent, when the sympathy of the crowd was attracted in her favour. Neither did the sweet and touching pathos of the Irish air attract him, as did the scientific harmony of Beethoven and Mozart. He uttered no exclamation of approval or delight, as the musician ceased, although her eyes, with an expression of innocent dauntlessness, sought his as she rose from her seat, and took her gloves and handkerchief a little hastily from the safe keeping of the Italian, who worshipped those dainty trifles, as he would have worshipped a relic of his patron saint.

The individual whom Sybil had honoured with a glance of recognition and inquiry, appeared, from the slightly sardonic smile that played on his lips, to be alive to the fact, and he uttered again, in a tone intended this time to reach her ear, 'A divine musician truly in every sense of the words.' And as he spoke he moved a little forward, that he might approach nearer to her, as she made her way through the crowd.

What was more remarkable, however, was that a simultaneous movement was made on the part of the lady, who seemed bent upon approaching this cynical stranger, for she purposely swerved a little in her path, until she stood opposite him; and then, in a low eager voice said to him, although her eyes were purposely turned away—'Not yet: you must not seek me yet.'

Who could the stranger be?

What curious and unexpected ren-
contre was this? What was the
meaning of the words which he to
whom they were addressed heard, it
is true, but heard no plainer than
did the jealous Italian, whose un-
welcome presence was not to be got
rid of by the severest frown that
had ever darkened the serene brow
of Sybil Vaughan.

It was a romantic incident that
occurred that day, and one probably
unparalleled even on the wide stage
of romantic meeting and incident contained
within the walls of the
great Brompton Exhibition; for, in
the face that met Sybil's gaze, when
she lifted her eyes for a moment to
survey the crowd which surrounded her, she recognized the face of her
husband, whom she supposed at
that moment to be seeking a fortune
in the wilds of Australia, and whose
sudden apparition, as may be sup-
posed, unnerved her completely for
the moment.

The young couple who thus met
accidentally, and, as it were, by
chance, within the walls which
have witnessed many strange meet-
ings, but none stranger or more un-
expected than this, must have had a
history, before chance could have
placed them in so curious a juxtaposi-
tion; and with that history it is
my present purpose to make the
reader acquainted, although it is
generally considered that the chap-
ter of romance closes with the last
peal of the wedding-bells, and with
the flash of the last white favour, or
the head-gear of the horses that
bear the happy couple away.

There were no wedding-bells
rung, however, and no white favours
distributed on the day that gave
Sybil Vaughan the title of wife. On
a grey November morning a young
and lovely maiden, attended by an
ancient female who bore a striking
resemblance to 'No. 2' of duenna
notoriety, hurried quickly through
the sombre London streets, and
were joined, before they had walked
far, by a young man of distinguished
bearing and handsome presence,
who silently offered his arm to the
maiden, and hurried her with a joy-
ous, but somewhat nervous eagerness,
on their way.

'Our wedding-day is not of the
most cheerful description,' he said;
'but, thank God, it is come; for I
sail to-morrow; and I could not
have left you *free*—free to forget,
elude, or forsake, in one of the hundred-and-one ways that women can
forget, elude, and forsake, with the
best grace in the world. No, Sybil,
we will part, as part we must, with
God's seal upon our vows, and then
carve our way to each other, and to
fortune and fame, through the toil
of our hands, and the sweat of our
brow. Are not these the terms of
our contract?'

'Yes,' said his companion firmly,
and with none of the hesitating con-
sciousness which might have been
supposed to attend a proceeding of
the clandestine nature described.
'Yes; those are the terms of our
agreement, with one clause which
you have forgotten—that we are to
hold *no communication with one
another*, saving on occasions of real
necessity or distress, until the time
comes when we can conscientiously
meet again. The case is this, as I
look upon it: I cannot give up my
art; we cannot afford to marry and
keep house; we prefer taking this
irrevocable step to being simply en-
gaged—at least, *you* prefer it, Allan,'
she said, smiling shyly, 'because, as
you insinuate, you cannot trust me.
We have every right to take it, and
I have no scruples of conscience in
doing so, only I cannot condescend
to petty deceptions: we will have
our great, precious secret, but no other.
When the time comes for
you to seek me, Allan, you will not
have to seek far; for by that time I
shall have a name.'

The air of innocent hauteur with
which this last sentence was uttered
brought a smile to the lips of the
bridegroom—not a smile of doubt
or derision, for he recognized and
appreciated the great talent with
which his bride was endowed, but
at the simplicity which presumed
that he would be content to lose all
traces of his wife, until her fame
should bring her once again under
his notice, with that of the rest of
the world.

They were both characters—that
is, they had both powerful, decided

natures, although they were both so young (Sybil being just of age, and her husband only five years older than herself), as the step in life they were then taking went far to prove. He was deeply and passionately attached to her—she was tenderly and trustfully attached to him; and when he proposed to ratify their mutual vows in the presence of God, before he left her to try his fortune in foreign lands, she consented without hesitation; in fact, it was not displeasing to herself, to feel that she would be irrevocably his, before the parting came which had so many pangs for both.

Their attachment was unsuspected, and had grown quickly, but silently, out of mutual admiration, and the mutual indulgence of the same hopes and aspirations: the ardent spirit of the man could not bear the drudgery of the office in which, as the younger son of a noble but impoverished family, he was condemned to toil; the proud heart of the girl rebelled against the bitter bread of dependence held out grudgingly to her and her father, by those whom his former bounty had fed: and they had both determined to work their way to wider fields of action, and to the attainment of more exalted aims, while youth and courage were still their own.

Whether they were right in supposing, that the sacred vows which they were about to take upon themselves, would sweeten the hours of toil, while, according to their present purpose, they would impose no extra care, it remained for time to prove; but, putting the question in the light in which these young and hopeful spirits considered it themselves, we own to an inclination towards their decision.

There was work before them to do before they would be justified in taking upon themselves household troubles and cares. There was mutual faith to be pledged—the sacred secrecy of sensitive passion to be preserved—no one to consult; for Sybil, as the bread-winner, had reversed the usual relations of father and child, and, by her present act, devoted herself more entirely to

him, than if she had obtained his sanction, and undertaken to wed Allan and poverty, under the usual circumstances, and subject to the usual contingencies.

Under such peculiar circumstances, and with such peculiar characters—strong to work, strong to wait, strong to do anything but vacillate or distrust—we hold that heaven itself smiled upon that union; and that the hands of husband and wife, joined for one little hour in that fervent grasp, and then separated to carve through the thicket of difficulty a way to each other again, had a noble purpose, which Providence itself would hold in approval and encouragement.

However that may have been, it concerns us now not to moralize, but to relate. The deed was done—the vows were exchanged—the ring was given—the register was signed—and Sybil Vaughan and Allan Estcourt stood at the church door, on that grey November morning, husband and wife; the ancient woman, Sybil's ci-devant nurse and present attendant, keeping discreetly in the background, while the few sentences were exchanged which were to form the scanty, but precious bullion of memory, for many long months to come.

'It is hard to say goodbye now, darling,' said Allan, 'but not impossible, as it would otherwise have been—now I have a claim upon you, not visionary and shadowy, but tangible and real. Now that I can call you my wife, I can face the world like a man; and you, my own Sybil, can you tell me that you do not regret the step which has changed one life at least from sombre morning to glowing noon? Tell me that you are happy, and seal the words with one wifely kiss, for God only knows when I shall claim the next from your lips.'

'Lest you should pine too much,' said his young bride, smiling through the blush which spread itself over her innocent face, enhancing its loveliness tenfold, 'see what I have brought you: the produce of my own work—hard work, Allan, but sweet, for it was all for you,' and she placed in his hand a gold locket

which contained her portrait in miniature, and, quite as precious, a lock of the bright, wavy, chestnut hair, which adorned a head graceful as that of a young fawn.

Her husband took the hardly-earned gift, with many fond words and caresses; he well knew what it must have cost her, when *she* talked of work; she, who was up early and down late; she, who felt no fatigue in the pursuit of the art she loved so passionately for itself, and through which she saw her way to results loved little less passionately for their own sakes. He saw in it a token of the strong will and the indomitable spirit, which he himself possessed in a remarkable degree, and the hour that made him a husband, made him a more passionate and a more admiring lover than he was before.

He, too, had his gift to offer—a small golden case made flat, so that it could be carried in the bosom of the wearer, and which, locking of itself, could only be opened by means of a secret spring. It already contained a photograph, imbedded in a velvet ground, and there remained space for the ring, and for a piece of folded paper, which, the husband explained to his young wife, was a copy of the register of their marriage—your 'marriage lines,' he added laughing, 'which you must only part with your life.'

This was Sybil Vaughan's wedding trousseau; these were the marriage presents of the adventurous young couple, who were going forth united in faith, but single in person, to grapple with the difficulties of life.

Neither of their hearts was likely to throb the less lightly for the sweet burden that was henceforth to be theirs—or for the kiss of true and sanctified affection, the first and the last, which joined the lips of husband and wife, in that hurried but hopeful parting.

'God bless you!' was the last sentence in the mouth of each, as they went sadly but quietly on their separate ways. Both were supported, not only by the same hope, but by the same assurance; and as Sybil Vaughan and Allan Estcourt knelt that night before the throne of God, and felt the deep responsibility which

each had incurred that day, no pang of self-accusation, no smart of a wounded conscience, intruded itself in that solemn hour. If they had erred, it was unwittingly—if they had deceived, it was tacitly—if they had outraged popular notions of decorum, it was innocently.

The condition imposed by Sybil, that there should be no communication by letter between them, was the one little touch of wilfulness, and perhaps in this case of romance also, that characterized her. It was, as she said, easy to her to take the step she had done—to have her one great secret safe in her own keeping, and in that of two other witnesses faithful to the death; but it would have been more than irksome to her to have commenced a system of duplicity about letters and news—to have a clandestine correspondence, although she had agreed to a clandestine marriage.

Perhaps in her heart she liked to feel herself, as it were, a wife in abeyance; a wife yet to be won; a wife for whom her husband was endowed with more romantic interest than a commonplace fiancé, who wrote every other day to his angel Araminta, would have been. And as to Allan himself, if, while he agreed to the request, he did not think it necessary to cancel the contract previously made between himself and 'No. 2,' by which she had consented to supply him regularly with news of his hour-old bride, on condition that he on his part would keep her acquainted with his whereabouts and prospects, perhaps the reader will agree that in his place he would most probably have done likewise.

These events had taken place exactly a year previously to the incident which we have described as occurring in the western dome of the Great International Exhibition of 1862. They will, no doubt, sufficiently account for the perturbation of mind into which Sybil was thrown on the occasion. Such chance meetings do not occur often, and it was only surprising, that she retained sufficient presence of mind to go through Allan's favourite air, with such pathos and feeling, and to gaze

once more into his face for approval, as she had done so often long ago.

As she raised her eyes to his, however, she encountered something which startled, nay, which terrified her; something which she had never seen there before—something which is always hateful in the face of man, woman, or child—the last word was written inadvertently, for in the face of childhood we never see the devil's stamp, *a sneer*. Yes, it has an ugly sound, and it had a direful meaning to Sybil. What had she done, that, in return for the innocent glance of affectionate recognition, she should be met with a sneer?

For the first time she trembled for the consequences of the step which she had taken. For the first time she wished to defer the moment in which her husband would come forward and claim her as his; and it was the instinctive feeling of self-defence against him who was bound to defend her till death, which made her, in those clear but faltering accents, forbid him to 'seek her yet.'

Alas! poor child, if she had erred, the day of retribution was come—if she had deceived, the pang of self-imposed reticence bore bitter fruit that day. The seconds were hours, the minutes days, in which she was obliged to keep up a constrained conversation with her father and the 'Signor'—before she could throw herself on her knees in an agony of grief, and cry from the depths of a bruised heart, Ah me, how changed! Oh God, how changed!—before she could snatch from her bosom the precious casket, and gaze upon the *features* which she knew by heart, upon the *countenance* which she would never see again. For where in Allan's honest eyes was the 'lurking devil' which she had seen that day? Where about his manly but tender mouth, those cruel and sinister lines, which could meet a woman's affectionate glance with implied contumely and contempt?

The more she gazed upon the photograph, the more her heart rebelled against that original whom her eyes had but just beheld in the flesh. With the quick instinctive perception of a woman, she felt that

the man's whole character must have undergone a radical change, before his countenance could have worn the expression now stereotyped in her mind's eye; and with the illogical conclusion also common to woman, she felt that she loved the former Allan better than ever, and almost found herself in thought appealing to him against his present terrible self.

This, then, was the meeting so long looked forward to! Thus, in one short moment, had the illusion of months been dispelled; and Sybil found herself standing on the threshold of happiness, struck to the soul with the cold blast which the opening door had let in upon her life. The bitterness of the disappointment was enhanced by the thought, that at no time could Allan have appeared more opportunely, or have found his bride in a prouder or more triumphant position, with regard to her art. She had attracted the attention of the admiring, and also of the criticizing public, by her marvellous execution, her original talent, and by her thorough mastery not only of the beauties, but of the *mathematics* (if we may be allowed the expression) of music. She had studied deeply as well as worked hard, and she had her reward in the hearty applause of some of the greatest musicians of the day.

She had also begun to be sought by the fashionable world, and the lady who had made a note of her talent in the morning at the Exhibition, sent to her that same evening, with a request most politely worded, that she would excuse a longer notice, and play at her house the next day at a matinée musicale, to which she had invited many people worth becoming known to, and to whom she hoped to have the pleasure of introducing the young artiste.

A prima donna more experienced or more sophisticated than Sybil Vaughan, would doubtless have resented this offer of an engagement at the eleventh hour; but she saw in this success the object of her life's labour near at hand, and she considered no sacrifice too great that earned the bread of independence for herself and her father. The

dearer, tenderer feeling of wifely love, was not either as yet extinct within her: it had burnt too long, and with too pure a flame to go out with the first breath.

Never, it must be confessed, had she looked more interestingly lovely than on the occasion in question. With a far-sighted policy she had made her toilette more costly and recherché than usual. She knew the value of appearances, in the sort of society of which she was about to become one of the ornaments. She knew that the paltry remuneration which the greatest of the ladies would not be ashamed to offer to the shabby débutante, would be trebled or quadrupled to the fashionably-dressed popular favourite.

Poor Signor Castello! his swarthy brow lowered upon imaginary magnates of 'London Society' that night, and he cursed the day and the hour when the Signorina bellissima went forth a glorified vision, to bless other eyes and other ears than his own.

She was chaperoned by a prima donna in the vocal line, whose meridian charms formed a glowing contrast with her youthful loveliness, and whose interest the 'Signor'—whose countrywoman she was—had enlisted on his own behalf.

'You are dressed to perfection tonight, bellissima,' said the frank, kind-hearted woman, who enjoyed nothing so much as the triumph of a young débutante, provided it took place under the shadow of her own capacious wing. 'You have de blush of de rose, and de white of de leilee; there is but this that your toilette craves'—and she placed in Sybil's hand a rare a beautiful bouquet, with a whisper to the effect that it was the gift of her Italian admirer. 'Do wear dem, carissima,' she added 'are dey not *les larmes de son cœur*? take dem—wear dem, dis once and he will be still.' Sybil took them almost mechanically: her thoughts were not with the poor Signor or with his beautiful and perishable gift: she was thinking of her husband, and wondering whether he would obey her injunction, or whether he may be expected at any moment to appear and lay claim to her as his wife.

'If any one comes,' she said to her trusty and confidential servant (who, it must be observed, had not recognized Allan in the crowd at the Exhibition, and to whom her young mistress had said nothing on the subject), 'if any one comes, let them wait, they need not see my father, or Signor Castello.'

'Well, my dear,' replied the ancient woman, who loved Sybil with the tender love of a mother, 'well, my dear, whoever they may be, you are worth waiting for—there is not a doubt, and wait they shall, I promise you.'

Which of us has not experienced, especially when unaccustomed to the sight, the exhilarating effects of a well-dressed crowd of people, in a well-lighted, artistically-arranged room, where elegance and refinement reign supreme, and *art*, the great enchanter, spreads his magic wand over all, uniting the separate rays into a charmed and perfect whole. We owe in a great measure the magic influence of refined art carried into the little things of life, to that great, and alas! silent prince, the noble patron of the beautiful and the good. Every home in England has felt, directly or collaterally, the beautifying influence of one great artistic mind; and refinement and fine taste are rapidly taking the palm from vulgarity and superfluity of adornment. On the very arrangement of the flowers for the decoration of our tables, we have cultivated minds now bestowing their best attention, as the pages of this Magazine have more than once testified. No wonder that the effect of a *tout ensemble* like that which was presented to Sybil's astonished gaze should have had the effect of exciting to the utmost her highly strung and artistic temperament. She felt as though she had slept and woken in fairy land; and with a slight pressure of her companion's jewelled and comely arm, she exclaimed, 'Oh, how exquisitely beautiful! I never saw anything to compare to this.'

'Ah, yes!' was the reply; 'it is very fine, but not so fine as miladi D—'s. Her room is de most superb: dis is the most comfortable

— de most preetee. What de Engleese call everyting—so *preetee*. “Ah, madame once again dat preetee song.” when I sing at my best—my most superb—den dey say, “Once again dat preetee song.” *Preetee* is de praise of fools—*preetee* is de praise of childs—*preetee* is de praise of dandies, who fear to spoil de preetee little mouze with de big word. Pshaw!” and her vocal highness gave a toss of her Juno-like head with an energy which would have bankrupted one of the dandies she sneered at, in that commodity for a month to come.

The lady of the house anxious to keep her principal stars in good humour with themselves and with one another, was not long in making her way to them, and with a few gracious words placed Sybil at her ease at once.

She being a solo performer, and her name being far down in the programme, her hostess gave her the opportunity of mixing a little previously among the audience, and of seeing and being seen; for her beauty and grace were two hits not to be thrown away by so accomplished a woman of the world as Lady S—. The young men, in particular, were anxious to be introduced to Miss Vaughan; in fact, showed a little more *empressemement* on the subject than did the ladies; who of course were loud in their unqualified praise, and anxious to set the young débutante whose charms so completely outshone their own at her ease among them. We have all, I dare say, witnessed the generosity displayed by the fairer sex on an occasion like the present; perhaps, like the tender mercies of those with whom it would be far from us to compare them, they are sometimes verging on the cruel.

Sybil was not shy, and she rather enjoyed the excitement of the scene which distracted her thoughts from the subject on which they had been brooding since the moment of the startling rencontre.

‘I heard you playing most divinely, Miss Vaughan,’ said one of the leading exquisites of the day, whose attentions would at once stamp Sybil as fashionable and the thing,

‘not that I am a judge of the science of it myself, but Estcourt, who was with me, and who is a connoisseur, has raved about you ever since.’

The blush which Sybil could not subdue when the name of her husband was thus casually mentioned for the first time before her, was of painful but beautiful intensity. What worshippers of beauty we are! the very same suffusion caused by a similar emotion, if it had displayed itself in a not uncomfortable flushing of the whole countenance, (perhaps if anything bestowing an undue portion upon the organ, which nature and art have both agreed to leave pale and cool), would have filled the beholder with the pity that is akin to contempt, rather than to the warmer emotion of love. As it was, however, the unusual sight of a genuine *beautiful* blush, roused to a greater extent the languid admiration of the high-bred crowd: and Sybil found herself, to her own amazement, and to the unfeigned satisfaction of her Juno-like chaperone, the centre of a circle, and that circle consisting of the ‘*crème de la crème*,’ and comprising not a few of the omnipotent leaders of exclusive London society.

When the time came for her to play, no less than three distinguished men made a simultaneous offer of their escort to the piano; and to avoid the invidious comparison of choice, she eluded all with a bow, and with swift and graceful, because unconscious movement, she made her way alone across the room. Then there were to be made all the tantalizing little arrangements, which herald sometimes the enjoyment of a rich treat—sometimes perhaps—but no; what right have we to cavil at the efforts of amateurs when they do their best to amuse? If we cannot be enchanted we may perhaps be surprised and electrified, and in these sensation days, that may answer every purpose, and crown expectation with the wished-for reward.

Sybil’s dainty gloves duly unbuttoned, and with her fan, handkerchief, and bouquet consigned to safe keeping, although not to that of poor Signor Castello, she prepared

to show what a mistress of the art of pianoforte playing can do. She had never before played to so refined an audience, or in the midst of so brilliant a scene, and she was fully alive to the effects of such unusual excitement. To use a sporting phrase—she warmed to her work; she out-did herself; she played with all her soul, and that passionate and poetic element came to light, in the music, whose life, tenderness, and brilliancy took even the most ardent of her admirers by storm.

Oh! here was a reward for the toil of months—for the toil of years—for the drudgeries, the wearinesses, the heart-sinkings of the season of apprenticeship! Now the reins of fancy were in her own hands: now she had only to will, and the well-organized forces manœuvred like one man, and went through the most complicated evolutions, as it were, on an inch square. Mind had triumphed over material, through the agency of which it again spoke to the minds of others; and Sybil's fingers, as they wrung, swept, or struck the music from the obedient instrument, awoke into new life and perhaps almost into original being some of the finest emotions of the soul. The silence of the audience was as though they had forgotten to breathe; it was almost painful in its intensity for some moments after the performer had ceased, and then the murmur of applause, felt rather than heard at first, went on increasing, like a wave of sound, until the room rang with the plaudits of the fair musician, who heard in them the first sweet herald notes of approaching *fame*. It is an intoxicating, a maddening draught; and Sybil felt for the first time the delicious realization of the day-dream of years. Her liquid blue eyes were moist with the tears of emotion; she breathed a little hard from the effects of real bodily exertion, and her colour came and went, as she gracefully acknowledged the overwhelming compliments which were pressed on her from every side. The professionals themselves, most of them foreigners, were eager to enrol her in their foremost ranks; and the composer whose music she had, out of compliment,

selected, knowing that he would be present on the occasion, fairly broke down in endeavouring to give utterance to his feeling of admiration and gratitude.

In the midst of the popular clamour—for even this fashionable assembly had cast aside in the excitement of the moment the languid repose

‘Which stamps the class of *Vere de Vere*?—

Sybil's eyes once more encountered those of—her husband! Allan was again before her in the moment of her triumph: he gazed upon her as before—admiringly, it is true—but still with that latent sneer upon his lip which told her so significantly that Allan was changed at the very core.

He made his way towards her, and Sybil, suppressing the startled cry which struggled for utterance, clung closer to the side of her good-natured chaperone. He could not claim her there—he could not claim her then—anything but that; she prayed in the inmost recesses of her heart—anything but that.

Her heart throbbed against the little golden casket which contained the photograph *once* his prototype, until she could hear its beatings. Her countenance was overspread with a painful pallor, and she raised her eyes to those which she felt rather than saw were bent upon her with that cynical, mocking glance. To how commonplace a level do the conventionalities of society reduce us; the first words that fell upon the ear of the anxious young wife almost reassured her from their very insignificance—

‘Pray let me offer you some refreshment; this crowd is killing you.’ And as Sybil rose mechanically to take the arm offered to her—her husband's arm—he added in a lower tone, ‘I could not be mistaken: twice in a crowd now, I have encountered a glance which ought to have made those moments the proudest of my life.’ Sybil trembled in every limb; he was proud then. Her triumph had touched his soul; all bitterness vanished with that thought, and was as though it had never been.

Impulsive, loving, successful, be-

loved, a pang of joy shot through her heart; and pressing her little hand eagerly on his arm she sobbed rather than said—

"And of mine; but it was cruel of you too. How could you tell but that I might have fainted away and disgraced myself before the populace for ever?"

"I did not lay the flattering unction to my soul, that my presence could have had such power," was the reply; and through the polished tenderness of his manner, returned, forcing itself upon Sybil's reluctant perception, the supercilious, derisive expression which had terrified her twice before.

"You are disingenuous," she said, haughtily, and withdrawing her arm from his; "such mock humility is foreign to your nature—and to mine," she added, again feeling the stab of disappointment bitter and keen.

Was this cold cynical stranger her own warm-hearted, honest, manly Allan?—was this his greeting after a year's separation? Could he stand and bandy words of empty compliment, instead of eager love? She despised him in her heart, in a way that omened ill for the happiness of their approaching domestic life.

Is it true, after all, that genius must fret and chafe at the fetters of every-day affection, and that there was a foreshadowing of disinclination to domestic duties, in the anxiety evinced by Sybil, to be entirely free from them during the first stage of their married career? Whatever might have been the cause, there is no denying that the clank of the chains of her own riveting, sounded dreary in her ears on their nearer approach—her heart sickened and died within her, and she said coldly to Allan—

"I am not well; I must go home. Take me to Signora D——."

"Instantly," was the reply, "if such is your wish; but I was most anxious to introduce you to a lady who is dying to make your acquaintance, and to ask you to her house; blindly magnanimous you will say, for the lady is—*my wife*."

He said these momentous words with the same cold smile with which he had previously addressed her;

and when the girl, upon whose gentle head he had heaped this last cruel insult, fell fainting at his feet, he appeared by a self-conscious, half-gratified air to take credit to himself for some virtuous act performed or meditated.

Oh, poor Sybil! what a termination for her night of triumph! What was it to her that the carriages of three countesses, were eagerly placed at her disposal—that the most distinguished of all that distinguished circle was eagerly solicitous on her account—abandoned, forsaken, deceived—what were they all to her?

When she arrived at their humble lodging the kind-hearted Italian was with difficulty persuaded to leave her to the care of her faithful attendant; and it was not till the last roll of her carriage wheels had died out of the distant street, that, with a convulsive effort, Sybil raised herself on the bed, and taking her golden treasure from her bosom gave it into Nelly's hands, saying, "Take it; it is over—it was a dream—and I have awoken; now I am awake." She kept repeating this last sentence over and over with a dreary monotony of tone, which frightened Nelly, and which, to tell the truth, completely mystified her, for she, too, had her news to communicate: she, too, had seen Allan; and when she had seen him his countenance had worn the same honest frankness as ever; and he had boasted that he had now not only a name and fame, but a title and fortune to offer to his wife.

When, however, Nelly began to soothe and caress her young mistress, and to endeavour to console her with the words, "I have great news for you, darling: *he is come back*," Sybil shrieked aloud, and said, "I know it—oh, God, I know it! Never mention his name to me again. I am awake now—now I am awake!" And so she went on moaning, and saying that *she was awake*, until her large tender eyes were bright with the fire of fever, which began to burn in her hands and in her head—the effects of over-excitement, both of a pleasurable and of a painful kind. She suffered much through the night, and in the morning her father,

alarmed by Nelly's representations, sent off hastily for a doctor. The messenger employed—none other than the faithful Castello—was also urged by Nelly to the delivery of a message to a person or persons unknown, who, she assured him, held the life of Miss Vaughan, from some unexplained cause, in his or their proper hands.

Allan Estcourt was at his club, awaiting a summons, it is true, but not the summons which he received, which was couched in these words—'Come at once: Miss Vaughan is very ill.' Was there no guilty pang—no self-accusing remorse—in the breast of the guilty Allan, whose countenance the Italian scanned with such jealous and revengeful scrutiny? Not any—solicitude the most eager, anxiety the most breathless, haste the most reckless—anything and everything but the slightest indication of a remorseful or a guilty conscience.

When the cab containing the two men finally reached its destination, the poor Signor was hastily hurled aside, and Mr. Vaughan, who, in the midst of his anxiety for his daughter, took Allan for the doctor, was surprised and alarmed at the series of bounds, with which the bearded, foreign-looking man scaled the staircase to his daughter's room; such a mode of progression being, to say the least of it, decidedly uncommon, among the dignified members of the faculty, with whom Mr. Vaughan's previous experience had brought him in contact.

Still greater, of course, was his surprise when he heard him address Nelly in these words, 'Tell me, for God's sake, what is this? Who has frightened her? who has killed her?' (For Signor Castello had exaggerated the nature and extent of Sybil's illness.) 'Where is she—my wife, my darling? Take me to her at once.' And so imperative was his manner that Nelly dared not disobey. She took Allan to his wife, who, in a burst of hysterical weeping, threw herself into his arms, for she recognized in the handsome, bearded stranger the real Allan—her own Allan—and renounced for ever the supercilious, sneering stranger, who, it came out in this happy dénouement, was none other than her husband's twin brother—like him in feature, like him in the tones of his exquisitely modulated voice, but unlike him in the regal frankness of his nature, in all the qualities that make a man, and that made Sybil's husband one of the noblest specimens of his race.

'I should have warned you against Cecil,' said Allan to his wife, when the confessions were made and accepted. 'But it is too good a joke to lose, that you should have made love to him by mistake, and that, after permitting your attentions, like the cold-hearted prig he is, he should have sacrificed you at the shrine of duty, and his wife at last. Come and see your brother-in-law, and acquaint him with your *little mistake*.'



MUSICAL MEMORIES: OPERA KINGS.*

AS we have disposed of the female coterie of the *Dii Majores* of the operatic hierarchy, omitting the Bosio (too early lost), the Titiens, the Ristori, to whom the highest intense were justly due, we now approach the gentlemen singers of the last thirty years, in terms only sufficient to recall their merits to those already familiar with their fame, but totally inadequate to present them 'in their doublet as they were' to those who know them not. In the accomplishment of our task we have been possessed by no purpose so serious as Mr. Chorley, consequently cannot pretend to offer anything like the completeness and vividness of his sketches. His likenesses are whole-lengths, and life-size: ours are only kit-cats, wanting shade, light, development—everything, save the desire to do both the author and his miscellaneous subject justice. We never saw Lablache from before the footlights, consequently can say nothing on our own authority respecting his operatic appearance; but we can speak by personal experience of the man Lablache, his rotund figure, his merry countenance, his frequent *fa-la-la* of sing-song, and his most resonant and hearty laughter.

.. 'None better knew the feast to sway
Or keep Mirth's boat in better trim;
For Nature had but little clay,
Like that of which she moulded him.'

Although we have not ourselves seen the operatic bow of the magnificent Neapolitan *basso*, we are enabled to speak oracularly when we quote the deliberate judicial verdict of Mr. Chorley, who says of 'this wonderful artist,' that he was, 'taking him for all in all, the most remarkable man whom I have ever seen in opera.' Mr. C.'s admiration is fixed upon his fine voice and admirable talent as a singer; but his enormous bulk made him also a remarkable person. Lablache was the vocal Daniel Lambert of the stage—a Heidelberg tun or brewer's vat of a man. He belonged to the family

* 'Thirty Years' Musical Recollections,' by Henry F. Chorley. In two volumes. London: Hurst and Blackett. 1862.

of the Crassi. His sock would have made a commodious cradle for a good-sized baby, while Goody Two-shoes could have stowed away her small family in his buskin. It was bigger to the eye than Etty's foreshortened boat, with 'Youth at the prow, and Pleasure at the helm.' He had no chance of suffering for treason, for his whole figure—at the antipodes of 'lean and hungry'—bespoke a well-to-do content. In girth he was a giant, but by no means remarkably tall, a well-proportioned, comely, very fat man: in his early years a young Apollo, in later life Bacchus and Momus rolled into one. His head and face were fine, with a pale olive complexion, and the features adapted to express varied emotion, from their flexibility and play. Strange to say, although Lablache's forte and proper calling was that of the *buffo*, there was nothing in his appearance in tragedy which could provoke a smile or recall his comic performances. Voice, manner, and outer man adapted themselves with inimitable tact and grace to the most serious rôle. He was thus a great actor as well as a delicious bass singer, with the most powerful as well as the richest and most musical voice of his time. His name and paternity are French; but, though of French extraction, he was born in Naples in 1784, and probably derived his deep and flexible tones from his actual birthplace, as France is deficient in voices of that order.

His musical education began early, when he was only twelve years of age, in the Conservatoire of Naples, and there his precocious perfection as a singer, combined with his impatience of control, made him play truant more than once from the establishment to indulge his taste as a strolling comedian. His education finally completed, and his volatile spirits settled by matrimony, he began a career of unvaried success in the principal theatres of Italy, and some sixteen years afterwards emerged on the operatic boards of Paris and London, where the acclaim with which he was received

was universal. 'An organ more richly toned or suave than his voice was never given to mortal. Its real compass was about two octaves, from E to E. In the upper portion of the register four or five of his tones had a power which could make itself heard above any orchestral thunders, or in the midst of any chorus, however gigantic either might be.' Thus to the majestic presence of a Jupiter he added, as occasion served, and always with propriety, the thunderous utterance of the cloud-compelling god.

From Lablache to Rubini is a wide distance in the quality of their voice, as well as in their respective theatrical bearing; but they were contemporaries during a greater part of their course. Lablache was a great actor in his peculiar walk, as well as the profoundest of bassos; but Rubini was only a singer, yet the most dulcet 'king of tenors'—a deserved favourite with the public on personal as well as artistic grounds, and a choice singer of operatic songs. His *Vivi tu*, in 'Anna Bolena,' his *Tutto e sciolto*, in 'La Sonnambula,' his *A te, o cara*, in the 'Puritani,' his *Il mio tesoro*, in the gallant *Don*, his *Tiranno cadrai*, in 'Malek Adhel,' created an ecstasy of delight in those who heard him. His voice had begun to fail and lose its freshness ere he came to England; yet, by the mixture of musical finish and personal excitement he displayed in song, he ruled the stage more completely than any successor has done since. His figure was not commanding—his face was mean and pock-marked—his stage-dress anyhow; yet in the enthusiasm created by his genial and artistic singing, every defect was forgotten, and his merits pronounced paramount. He was the last of the great tenors for whom Rossini composed. He made a large fortune, and, like a wise man, kept it to solace his retirement from public life, and warm the chill of declining years.

Antonio Tamburini, a remarkable bass singer, only second to Lablache, figures next upon our scene—the son of a military band-master, and early initiated in the exercise of instrumental music. His first appearance as a singer in England dates from

1832, his years being then thirty-two, as his birth dates from the beginning of the century. He was a singularly handsome man; his voice was rich, sweet, extensive, equal, ranging from F to F, two perfect octaves, and in every part of it entirely under control. His acting, both in tragedy and comedy, was sensible and spirited, without those flashes of passion or drollery which have since atoned for much vocal imperfection in Ronconi. No one has since approached him in such music as that of the aria *Sorgete*, from 'Maometto,' in the part of *Assur* in 'Semiramide,' of *Fernando* in 'La Gazza Ladra.' For some twenty years after the period of his appearance here he delighted the audiences of Paris and London with his powers, and then retired into private life in the neighbourhood of the French capital, where he still lives.

Giuseppe Mario does not appear amongst us till the year 1839—an amateur before he was a regular actor—for whom the prestige of his birth, his taste, his manner, his personal appearance, have done much to secure approbation for his operatic course, and prepare the way for the fascination exercised by him in after years. Interrupted in a military career, the young Marquis de Candia adopted the stage. A successful appearance at Paris led to an engagement in London, where every succeeding year has added to his popularity. There has always been more or less of the amateur in his performances, an incompleteness of artistic finish which diligent study might have remedied; but the nameless charm exercised by his gentlemanly presence, combined with the sweetness of his voice, has overborne criticism, and wafted him into port with sails set and pennants flying. He has proved the best opera lover ever seen. The walking gentleman in *Don Pasquale*, with his serenade, is exquisite, a thing never to be forgotten—we cannot forget it—by those who have witnessed it.

Like Rubini, he is great in song and romance singing, but rather in the concert room than on the stage, where his range of action is limited. The young, the graceful, the refined

he represents with ease; but strong passion combined with great power is totally beyond his grasp. He dresses, woos, and warbles like a young Apollo or an *arbiter elegantiarum*. To hear him is to an Irishman a dream of Blarney. This soft lover recalls the cooing of 'the dove, or the gentle plover in the afternoon.' Mario is now fifty-two years of age.

Staudigl, an Austrian, was first heard in London in German opera in the year 1840—a bass of the Tamburini compass and order—the best of our time. Germany is noted for its basses, as France is for its lack of everything like a rich or distinctive voice of any register. Staudigl had the singular good fortune to spend his youth in that rich home of picturesque landscape, the convent of Mölk, on the Danube, where the Benedictines cultivate a lettered *otium* in a college of palatial dignity. Some seventeen years ago we gazed upon its towers, not then knowing that its romantic seclusion had cultivated the fine voice and musical skill of Staudigl, whose notes had doubtless rung in unison with its organ under the gilded roof of their monastic church. The day we passed in its vicinage is one of the sunny days in our continental experiences—our benediction on the brothers Benedictine, bating all exceptions, being from the heart. Of Staudigl we can only further say, that directly he appeared he was recognized as a great singer—a great artist: a man born with a real vocation for the stage and for music.

For Duprez, a French singer of first-rate quality of science, but ill seconded by an inferior voice, Mr. Chorley, as a scientific amateur, cherishes a natural partiality. He speaks of him, indeed, in the most friendly terms, as redeeming by his judgment, skill, tact, and propriety his second-rate vocal endowments:—

"M. Duprez was . . . the finest dramatic tenor singer I have ever heard and seen on the stage, giving our careless countrymen not merely lessons how to sing, how to act, so as to make natural disqualifications forgotten, but absolutely, too, how to speak their own language audibly and accurately . . . both his singing and his saying having such perfection of intellect

(not of organ), as makes the singing, and still more the saying, by a foreigner remembered."

Mr. Chorley, like all sensible hearers of good music, is flattered by the evident pains taken by any artist to do his best. This can never fail to please. A purer faculty, unattended by the desire to excel, proceeding perfunctorily through a drama or a song as through a task, thinking more of the *rouleaux* than of the *roulades*, will win small favour from the discerning few. However meritorious an artist may be, it enhances his merits to an extraordinary degree to see him respect his public, his vocation, and himself. On this head Duprez was most meritorious.

Gardoni, of this period, was an elegant singer, as even a slenderly endowed Italian could not fail to be. Salvi, of 1847, with a good tenor voice, failed from being totally uninteresting. Marini, with a fine, deep organ, was too commonly out of tune to be available for enjoyment. Rovere was an elaborate comedian, in whom the effort choked the fun, so that Lablache styled him as 'comical as a hearse'—the merry *basso* little guessing how jovial undertakers can be about a funeral, who live by dying, and laugh and grow fat upon crape and weepers. Poloni, of the same year, was one of the most valuable artists of the second class possessed by any theatre; while Bettini was so bad a tenor that it is superfluous to speak of him further. We place these references to the smaller fry on record, but hasten to deal with heroes of greater bulk, and less doubtful quality.

Ronconi was a great artist, not a delicious singer; one whose striking method, dignity, and force, wild *abandon* in comedy, and strong passion in tragedy, made amends for narrow compass of voice and the absence of personal beauty. Ronconi made it as great a treat to hear him as to listen to the strains of one of the natural sirens of the opera, whose volubility and sweetness of notes might recal the song of the nightingale. Mr. Chorley frankly allows, 'I owe some of my best opera-evenings to Signor Ronconi.'

The *Doge* of this actor in the 'Due Foscari' fairly took the wind out of the sails of Madame Grisi and Signor Mario, who sustained leading parts in the play. The subtlety of his by-play in the last act was rare, original, and real. In the 'Elixir' his half-starved apothecary is as forcibly comic, as original, as any actor ever presented in opera-farce.

A highly commendable feature of Mr. Chorley's book is, that it does ample justice to our English singers, musicians, and composers; no small merit, while in some circles one must transform Jerry Buggins into Hieronimo Buggini, and plain Patty Smith into Penelope Smiffo to obtain recognition for undoubted musical talent and vocal endowment. Whatever of honest eulogy our recorder may bestow on foreign artistic execution in the course of his review, he allows no native merit to wither under the shade of Italian laurels, but draws into the sunshine of his genial approbation, and pats on the back every son and daughter of John Bull who adorns the musical profession, whatever be the lack of euphony attendant on the syllables of their name. It is our agreeable task to record his deliberate judgment on the 'Quatre Fils Aymon,' by Balfe, our most prolific and graceful operatic writer. Mr. Chorley styles this work 'an opera of delicious freshness and deep merit.'

On M. Costa, the incomparable leader of the orchestra, he lavishes encomiums without stint—the subject of his praises being English all but in name and birth. Mr. Chorley does him no more than justice when he places him at the head of his profession in Great Britain.

As the record proceeds, and, in nautical phrase, he 'reels off the log,' our author is constrained to mark a gradual but certain decline of foreign talent on the operatic boards, and to hail an increase of harmonious voices, musical development, and choral excellence amongst his strictly native-born artistæ. Mr. Chorley is patriot enough not to be sorry for this—that a clearer field is furnished for the exhibition and cultivation of English musical science; but at the same time, as a

cosmopolite, and an accomplished musician, he notes and bewails the inferiority which reigns on the operatic stage over all continental Europe. Either their public is less exacting—a supposition broadly enough put by Mr. Chorley—or the voices and the style are not to be found which once charmed sage and trifler alike, and held them captive by their ears. It is a happy circumstance for the *habitués* of London Society that whether in the concert-room or the theatre, in oratorio or operæ, they can never fail of the full gratification which vocal music can render, from the rich organs of their Sainton-Dolbys, Pyne's, and Lemmens-Sherringtons, their Sims Reeves', and Harrisons, and Charles Brahams, and many besides.

As an accomplished judge of music, our author is sufficiently severe on amateur singing, instrumental performances, and operatic composition. He sees the downfall of art in the natural mode of singing, as it is called, while there can be no natural mode of singing opera, itself the highest production of artifice and science:—

' Why not as well speak of natural playing on the violin, or other instrument, which is to be brought under control? A more absurd phrase (than "Nature-singing") was never coined by ignorance conceiving itself sagacity. Why as well not have nature-civilization? nature-painting? nature-cleanliness? But on the rock of this difficulty the German singers and German composers have split.'

Examples more than enough we might furnish of this great fault and most serious delusion, but that, copying the delicate reticence of our author, we refrain. As there are no pecuniary interests to be damaged in the case of the amateur Duke of Saxe-Coburg, our reticence need not extend itself to his 'Casilda,' which is a respectable echo of other respectable music, but nothing more. On the whole question of amateurship Mr. Chorley very aptly says:—

' I doubt the feasibility of amateur stage-composition—amateur scaling of ladders to get into a sharply-fenced citadel—amateur running up the rigging on a stormy night—amateur resolution to do one of the

hardest, most painful, of artistic tasks ; where the bad chances are as ten to one : where the caprices are infinite, where there are mire and sand to be waded through,— where there is experience to be bought, by Time and Labour and not by Influence and Gold.'

All this is so truly, as well as so forcibly said, that it must carry conviction to the mind of every reader. The science of music is not play, any more than the other sciences. Thousands of aspirants, lying sorely discomfited at the bottom of the Polyhymnian mount, sing in chorus with an effect denied to their own compositions—

'Ah ! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep ?'

Before our author closes his volume he pays handsome compliments to the two most recent foreign tenors, Giuglini and Bélart—the one a sentimental, the other a showy tenor; Bélart, alas ! now deceased, but Giuglini still surviving. This gentleman is distinguished by the suavity of his voice, and by gentle and expressive execution, in contrast to the system of vociferation now exclusively patronized on the Italian stage. Since Tamberlik, no gentleman singer has come to us from abroad who has afforded such universal satisfaction. The entire state of the opera in Italy is so degenerate from what it used to be, that it is painfully perceptible to every intelligent traveller. The very quality of the voices seems altered—the melody extracted, and noise put in its place. Mr. Chorley notes and freely comments upon this phenomenon :—

'We are now rapidly approaching a period when the Italian opera-houses on this side of the Alps at least must be maintained by French, German, English, and absolutely American singers ; and it need not surprise any one, should the chronicler, who, thirty years hence, shall attempt a task such as mine now rapidly approaching its close, have to point to Signor Giuglini as the last of the Italian tenors, in whom some of the graces of "the good old time" still lingered.'

Speaking hopefully of English song, Mr. Chorley proceeds, and with this sentiment we must at least approximate our close, expressing

our gratitude for his frank and laborious review of a very disjointed subject, which requires the hand of an expert to manage with effect and grace :—

'That our artists have derived benefit from that which has harmed the Germans,—the increased appreciation of instrumental music—it would not be hard to prove. They have improved, too, as linguists, while the singers of other nations have stood still. In short, there is rally and progress in our world of music, strangely capricious as are its motions. A higher standard of execution is desired and tried for than formerly—a more intelligent rivalry with the artists of other countries. In these polyglott days the English singers stand better before the world that they did thirty years ago.'

In order to pass the competent judgments of these volumes upon a history and merits so varied as that of more than one opera-house, and a host of musicians, singers, and balladistes, one must possess the musical education of the author, and, above all, his feeling soul, and artistic taste. Nothing can make up for the lack of these, or any one of these. We are greatly struck in the perusal of the chronicle with the ample proofs of deep and genuine sensibility awakened in his soul by the tones and actions of the best singers on the stage. One might expect the chronicler to be *blase* and callous by this time to the simulated griefs and pangs of the mimic life of the footlights ; but, somehow or other, our connoisseur, like the man who possessed the secret of perpetual juvenility,

'has kept
The freshness of his soul.'

and is as ready to weep or smile as the veriest maiden with whom the present is her first opera season. The music is in the author's soul rather than his ears. He is a practical example of the doctrine of that poet who is as wild as the *wald* of his native woods :—

'All music is that which awakes *from* you,
When you are *reminded* by the instruments :
It is not the violins and the cornets,—
It is not the oboe, nor the beating drums,—
Nor the score of the baritone singer, singing
his sweet romanza,—
Nor that of the men's chorus, nor that of the
women's chorus,
It is nearer and farther than they.'

A DAY AT A SHOOTING LODGE.

Lochvalleon Lodge,
August 22, 1862.

DEAR FRANK,
R ANY morning, and we can-
not take the hill till after
lunch, so you shall have my first
day's work.

I arrived here after dark on the
20th, and had a hearty welcome
from George and his father. A
tumbler of punch, a pipe in the
night air, a squint at the comet,
and then to bed.

In the morning, awakened by
George singing in the room next
mine, I bolted out of bed and was
splashing in the bath when he came
in, shouting, 'Up, lazy bones, such a
morning!'

I was soon dressed and out,
anxious to see the place by daylight,
and very lovely it is. The Lodge, a
rough, turreted building, stands on
a green terrace beside a beautiful
little lake, beyond which the hills
rise sheer up densely and finely
wooded several hundred feet.
Higher up still are piles of grey
granite, interspersed with juniper
and Scotch fir, and beyond all the
glorious purple of the grouse moun-
tains. All around is wood, rock,
ferns, or water, with the exception
of the terraced walk circling the
Lodge, and the flower garden and
shrubbery running clear up to the
edge of the wood; but you shall see
when you come in September.

Well, after breakfast we made
tracks, as the Yankees say, for the
moors, and had a mile of pretty stiff
walking up the woods—saw some
roedeer and now and then a caper-
cailzie whisking through the pines.
How rapid and quiet is the flight of
these great birds; a partridge in
rising makes five times the bob-
b ery. Out of the wood, a footpath
leading steeply up through rock, fern,
and long heather, soon led us to the
crest of the first hill, where we found
gillies, guns, dogs, ponies, and pan-
niers all waiting.

'Well, Sandy,' said George to the
head keeper, 'this looks something
like a day.'

S. 'Yes, sir; we should make a
bag.'

G. 'Then let us be off. How
shall we do?'

S. 'I think, sir, we should begin
by taking the face of Brennan and
round the Ordies, and Willie Menzies
and Peter go with Mr. —— up the
Skerries by Corriebrae and shoot
down the glen till they meet us.'

G. 'All right. Lunch at the
Dwarf's Spring at three o'clock.
Good bye till then. Keep your
eyes skinned, and 'ware potting
goats like—'

We started—each on his own
hook, and equally provided: so I
will give you my staff, as you are
not yet initiated in hill work. I had
Willie Menzies, a smart young High-
lander, as loader; Peter to work the
dogs; and a small wiry Celt, by
George styled the Whistler, who
looked to the pony and game baskets,
besides being very useful in marking
down the coveys, as he was usually
within sight and well uphill. I had
two capital pointers, Ben and Jess,
and a pawky old setter called Dick
as a reserve. I carried my own
breech-loader, and Willie a spare
gun, *me voilà prêt*.

We were nearly half a mile off
when George fired two shots, and
three grouse came my way. I had
a rapid right-and-left and dropped
one—first blood. We soon un-
coupled the pointers and led off up
to the west, when, passing a marshy
hollow, Ben pointed sharp round,
Jess backing nicely. We got well
in, and I had four barrels and killed
three birds.

'Mark!' shouted Willie to the
Whistler, who was on with the pony: the
Whistler telegraphs, the birds
are down behind the first ridge. We
went on, and passing some rough
ground I made a clipping shot at
an old cock grouse, and almost im-
mediately sprung five birds, making
a ghastly exhibition, missing both
barrels: easy shots. We soon came
to the place indicated by the Whistler
as the whereabouts of the first covey;
the dogs began to draw.

'Canny, now,' said Willie, 'they may sit light; but they sat close, and I got another brace.'

We now crossed for the Skerries, but between us and the rise of the hill was a marshy stretch of ground, with here and there a dry rugged brae. This bit, Willie said, was sometimes good lying for birds. We coupled up the pointers, and canny Dick was set at liberty; and deliberately and astutely did that prudent quadruped work the ground. A choice beat it turned out, for I got in less than an hour three and a half brace of grouse, a teal, and five rabbits.

At the foot of the Skerries we found two coveys of cheepers, left for you. We also hit on some broods of black game, but they are to be left for a week or ten days yet.

We now began to climb the Skerries.

'Better not smoke, sir,' said Willie. 'It's a gey stiff rise, and we can get a blast at the tap.'

'Is it windy?' I asked.

'Hoot!' laughed Willie, 'ye know a blast means a smoke.'

'Ah, indeed! Then the blasted heath in Macbeth was where the witches had their whif—eh, Willie?'

Willie slyly said he suspected it was Muirburn that was meant, as Yankees and tobacco were then unknown, at least about Birnam.

Queer fellows these Highland gillies. Intelligent and self-possessed, you may be companionable with them safely. They never get familiar as a Lowlander or Englishman might do in the same circumstances.

Well, we had a tough climb, and I made some awkward misses on the way up, but got two brace more and a hare. Hot and panting, I topped the crest of the hill, and revelling in the fresh west wind that met my face, sat down to rest and enjoy the view. Right and left the purple hills—below at our feet the glistening loch. Looking north I saw into the very centre of the Highlands range on range of rugged hills, bounded by the pale blue peaks of the distant Grampians; while southwards the eye, looking beyond the lower ridges, covers a large extent of cultivated country, and far

in that direction I saw woods and fields blinking in the haze of a sultry August day.

Now we enjoyed a short rest, and the promised blast. We moved along the west face of the hill; and in this beat I got three rabbits, two hares, and one and a half brace of birds, and, close to the loch, a couple of teal and a snipe.

We now rounded the Skerries and took to the right to meet George, whom we heard shooting towards us. By-and-by they came over the shoulder of the hill, and we went on together to the place fixed for lunch. The usual 'What sport?' 'Capital.' 'What have you done?' 'Oh, very fair.'

We came shortly to the feeding ground, and spread Macintosh cloaks and plaids on the thick elastic heather. The spring bubbled up clear, and cold as ice, shaded by a huge projection of granite clumped with fern and bluebells.

The game was taken from the hampers and laid in rows on the heather. George had fourteen brace of grouse, two and a half couple of snipes, a hare, and a rabbit; I had ten and a half brace of grouse, three hares, one snipe, eight rabbits, and one and a half couple teal.

Total before lunch—

Grouse, 24½ brace.

Teal, 3.

Snipe, 3 couple.

Hares, 4.

Rabbits, 9.

Quite an ample bag when shooting is for pastime and friendly boxes—not for the poulturer.

A jaunty little cloth with etceteras was spread on the heather, bottles laid in the spring to cool, and provisions speedily brought to light, comprising half a salmon, a grouse pie, roast beef and mutton, anchovy paste, cheese, bread, oat-cakes, and butter. Great institution lunch on the hill, and greatly and thankfully we enjoyed it. Our drinking was very moderate—a glass of sherry apiece, two or more beakers of hock, iced in the spring, crowned with a wee dram of whisky. We then settled to quiet smoking, George limiting himself to a couple of mild cigars, while I perfumed

the air with a capacious pipe of honeydew; the men meanwhile feeding merrily behind the knoll, and making frequent visits to the spring, which denoted consumption of fire-water.

An hour's delicious rest and we were up and away to shoot home together. When hardly started—

'Mark! blackcock,' was energetically whispered by Sandy, and a fine old fellow sailed rapidly past. I fired and—missed, George toppling him over at a long shot. Such a beauty, a very patriarch of cocks.

All the afternoon we had fair shooting, killing nine brace more grouse, and three hares. When near the finish of our day, at the woodside, George saw a large flight of golden plovers and went after them. I sat down to wait. How quiet the moor towards night! not a sound, save now and again the bleat of some distant sheep, or the clear wild whistle of the curlew as he passes high overhead. George soon came back, with only three plovers. Yesterday he got thirteen at four shots. We were now close to the wood. I killed a rabbit at the fence, our last shot.

Leaving the men and ponies to

follow at leisure, we soon threaded the woods to the Lodge.

A plentiful supply of water, change of clothes, thin shoes, and a glass of sherry, and I felt lithe as a dancing-master, ready for dinner and a chat with the old gentleman, lunch seemed so long ago, almost a week.

Dinner over, we had music from George's little nieces. Carry, the youngest, at nine years and two months, is a prodigy at the piano, with a touch like Thalberg, and is withal a funny little minx. What do you think of her quietly leaving the instrument and coming up to me, saying—

'Tell me, Mr. ——, who mith'd the blackcock?'

'I did, thou small bit of womanhood; but I shan't mith you.' So I lifted her up and kissed her, whereat she pouted for nearly two minutes, but was pacified by my promising to mount the bird's tail deftly in her hat.

But halt, George has been telling me for ten minutes back to cease scribbling, and have a cast for trout, so be thankful, and believe me

Yours,
W. F.

To Frank ——, Esq., London.

SANDRINGHAM AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

PART I.

ON this first of October 1862, when the Prince of Wales once purposed to shoot his first pheasants on his new domain of Sandringham, it may not be uninteresting to our readers to be presented with a few pages descriptive of the place which has received honour and attained celebrity by its new ownership.

Sandringham is a small village in Norfolk about eight miles from Lynn, towards the north. It is little remarkable itself for anything historical or traditional; but in its immediate neighbourhood are places of much interest, topographical, historical, biographical, and archaeological.

We propose, then, to take Lynn as a stand-point from which to commence, and after diverging some-

what into the Marsh and Fen lands, for the sake of noting the great engineering works which have been and still are carried on there, to dispute territory with the sea, to glance briefly at the most striking places connected with the north-western corner of Norfolk, of which Sandringham forms a kind of centre.

Situate near the mouth of the Ouse, a large and rapid river, is Lynn Regis, by far the most important town in this neighbourhood, which merits as much of detailed account as we can give in a short paper. Its origin dates back to remotest history in England; indeed, it is conjectured that Lynn was founded as the residence of a colony of Belgæ who were brought over by Catus Decianus, Procurator of

the province of the Iceni, in the reign of Claudius Cæsar. His command extended over Norfolk, Suffolk, the northern part of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and part of Lincolnshire. This Catus was the blackguard who caused the intrepid Boadicea to be scourged, while her daughter suffered still worse indignities. The Queen of the Iceni has been described by a classic historian as a woman of lofty stature and severe countenance. Her yellow hair almost reached to the ground. She wore a plaited tunic of various colours, round her waist a chain of gold, and over these a long mantle.

Catus introduced these Belgæ to facilitate the work of enclosing the marsh and fen lands from the sea, by the erection of great earthen banks; for at that time it is probable that the whole of the vast district of the fens was covered periodically, if not constantly, by the sea at high water: the tidal wave from the German Ocean rushes up the rivers with astonishing force and velocity, and occasionally breaks down the defences which have from time to time been raised. A very deplorable instance of this occurred lately, by the bursting of a sluice through which a great portion of the fen waters were discharged into the Ouse. Near ten thousand acres of the most fertile land in the country were submerged, and a large portion of this land is still under water.

The most important of these banks, which has been known from time immemorial as the Roman Bank, extends from the sea coast near Lynn, and, passing through what is now a well-populated, highly-cultivated and fertile country, by Wisbech, where it is at least eleven miles in a direct line from the sea, reaches the coast again near the outfall of the river Welland. This bank must have been the sea barrier for a long series of years, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood conceive, for many centuries. One reason for this opinion is that until within the last twenty years, there has been no church on the seaward side of the bank. The land side is crowded with the finest

parochial churches in the kingdom, indicating a wealthy and populous country; while the absence of churches on the sea side would seem to indicate that the land was unenclosed, barren, and incapable of supporting inhabitants.

During the last three centuries, however, several banks have been successively erected, by means of which the sea has been driven back by degrees: the most important work of late years was the cutting a straight channel for the river Nene, and the constructing an embankment across the Wash, with a capital road on its top, not far from the place where the luckless John, and years later, Edward IV. lost their baggage and treasure. Minor works of a similar character have been made, and some are still in process of construction. Some few years ago an Act of Parliament was obtained to enable the Adventurers (or their descendants) to enclose the whole bay from the north-west corner of Norfolk to the opposite shore of Lincolnshire. So stupendous a work may occupy many generations; but by what has been done within the memory of living men, it may be judged that the entire scheme will be ultimately accomplished. The new land, *when it is reclaimed*, is to be called Victoria county, and provision is made in the plan for the debouchment by one large channel, of the four rivers which now discharge themselves separately into the Waab, namely, the Ouse, below Lynn; the Nene, Wisbech river; the Welland, at Foss-dyke; and the Witham, below Boston.

Tradition says that it was John who bestowed the title of King's Lynn on the town, but documentary evidence contradicts this, for a parchment still preserved among the public archives, namely, a petition to the Bishop of Norwich, who possessed the lordship of the town, is subscribed by 'Your own humblest tenants and devout Beadsmen, Mayre and good men of your towne of Lenne Bishopope.' A will of Thomas Walpole, dated at Bishop's Lynn, in the year 1512, still exists. It appears that Edward the Con-

fessor divided the property in the town of Lynn among three eminent men—Stigand the primate, Harold, afterwards for a short time king, and Aylmer, Bishop of Elmham, which see was afterwards removed to Thetford, and finally to Norwich. To the latter was given the lordship of the town, and so it was called Lynn Episcopi, or Bishop's Lynn, until after the property of the monasteries and religious houses was confiscated, and the lordship of the town taken to himself by Henry VIII., since which time it has been known by its present title of Lynn Regis.

There is, however, abundant evidence that John was a great benefactor to Lynn, and also that he received from its inhabitants loyalty, and, better still, supplies, during the wars with his turbulent barons. He granted a charter, and is said to have presented a massive silver cup which still forms a part of the civic apparatus, and a sword of state, still carried before the Mayor on public occasions. There is considerable doubt in the matter of the sword, and probably a little about the cup. In the year 1216, John, having raised a small army, with supplies for a campaign, attempted to go over to Lincolnshire by crossing the bay of the Wash which separates that county from Norfolk, and was supposed to be safely fordable at low water. By a miscalculation of the time, the tide coming upon them in unexpectedly, all the appointments and baggage were overwhelmed in the advancing waves, the king and his soldiers barely saving their lives.

There is a house on the Lincolnshire side, in the parish of Sutton St. Mary, at which, it is said, the king rested immediately on his arrival at terra firma; of course very little of the then existing structure can be supposed to remain; but the present occupier of the house and adjacent farm is accustomed to show the curious visitor a room in one corner which he states to have been part of the veritable house in which John took refuge: however, it is certain that in the last Ordnance Map—generally a very good and trustworthy authority—the house is

called 'King John's house,' and in the books and records of Guy's Hospital in London, to which all the neighbouring land belongs, the farm is always called 'King John's Farm.'

A similar misfortune befel Edward IV. when fleeing before the forces of the Earl of Warwick, known as the Kingmaker, and in our times celebrated by Bulwer as the 'Last of the Barons.'

There have been many illustrious men born at, or intimately connected with Lynn, of whom we will mention a few. Sir* William Sautre was the first man recorded to have suffered death for his religious opinions in contradiction to the Church of Rome. He was parish priest of St. Margaret's at the latter end of the fourteenth century. On the 1st of May 1399, he was cited before an Ecclesiastical Court to answer several charges of holding heretical opinions, most of which were identical with those professed by the men afterwards known as Protestants; he defended himself boldly before his diocesan, bishop Spencer, a notorious high churchman of the period, whom a contemporary writer calls a 'real thorough-going Church-militant prelate.'

The court, not being able to silence him, or to refute his arguments openly, tried to effect his conversion from what they called heresy, by a method not uncommon in those times, namely, by imprisonment and torture. The sufferings he then endured, by reducing and emaciating his body, enfeebled his mind and subdued his spirit; so we find him, after eighteen days' confinement, brought into court again, declaring himself prepared to renounce the errors with which he was charged. His deprivation of course followed, and he was compelled to read a recantation in his own parish church and other places determined by the unrelenting and persecuting bishop.

Sautre, when he left Lynn, was appointed to the parish of St. Oswith, in London. Lollardism had spread considerably at that

* Sir, by virtue of his office of parish priest.

time, and no doubt he would be very acceptable to his new parishioners, but not so to the church dignitaries, who again summoned him to an ecclesiastical tribunal, where this time, however, he persistently maintained the truth of his opinions. He was condemned and burnt at Smithfield, and to Henry IV., usurper and bigot, belongs the shame of having first suffered, if not ordered, the death of a subject for religion's sake.

The archbishop's sentence of degradation, whereby Sautre was committed to the secular court, ends with this expression: 'Beseeching the court aforesaid, that they will receive favourably the said William unto them thus re-committed.' This is a

specimen of what old Fuller quaintly calls 'The clergie's mock-mercy.'

Eugene Aram, whose extraordinary story forms the groundwork of Bulwer's novel with that title, and a wonderful ballad by Thomas Hood, was usher at the Grammar School at Lynn, and was thence taken in custody for the crime which has attached so horrid a notoriety to his name. This man was a wonderful scholar, being equally versed in the classics, mathematics, and Oriental languages. As he had received only a poor education when a boy, he must have possessed enormous powers of application, to succeed by his own efforts in becoming a very prodigy of learning.

'LONDON SOCIETY' IN PARIS.

A BOX ON THE EARS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

(*Being an Extract from the Corresponding Diary of a Dowager.*)

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs gave a fancy dress ball last Wednesday. The guests were expected to come in the costume of the time of Louis XIV.; and they did. The salons had been re-decorated for the occasion, so that the guests should not look like old Sèvres ornamenting a modern ball-room. The panels, painted after Watteau, represented shepherds and shepherdesses, Lindor, Colombine and Pierrot, Venus and Adonis, dressed in wigs and hoops, and Europa accoutred in a falbala. All was complete, according to the ideas of those days—even the laqueys and chamberlains kept to the strict traditions, not only as regards costume, but in the minutest details of etiquette observed by the 'gens' of that most magnificent of monarchs.

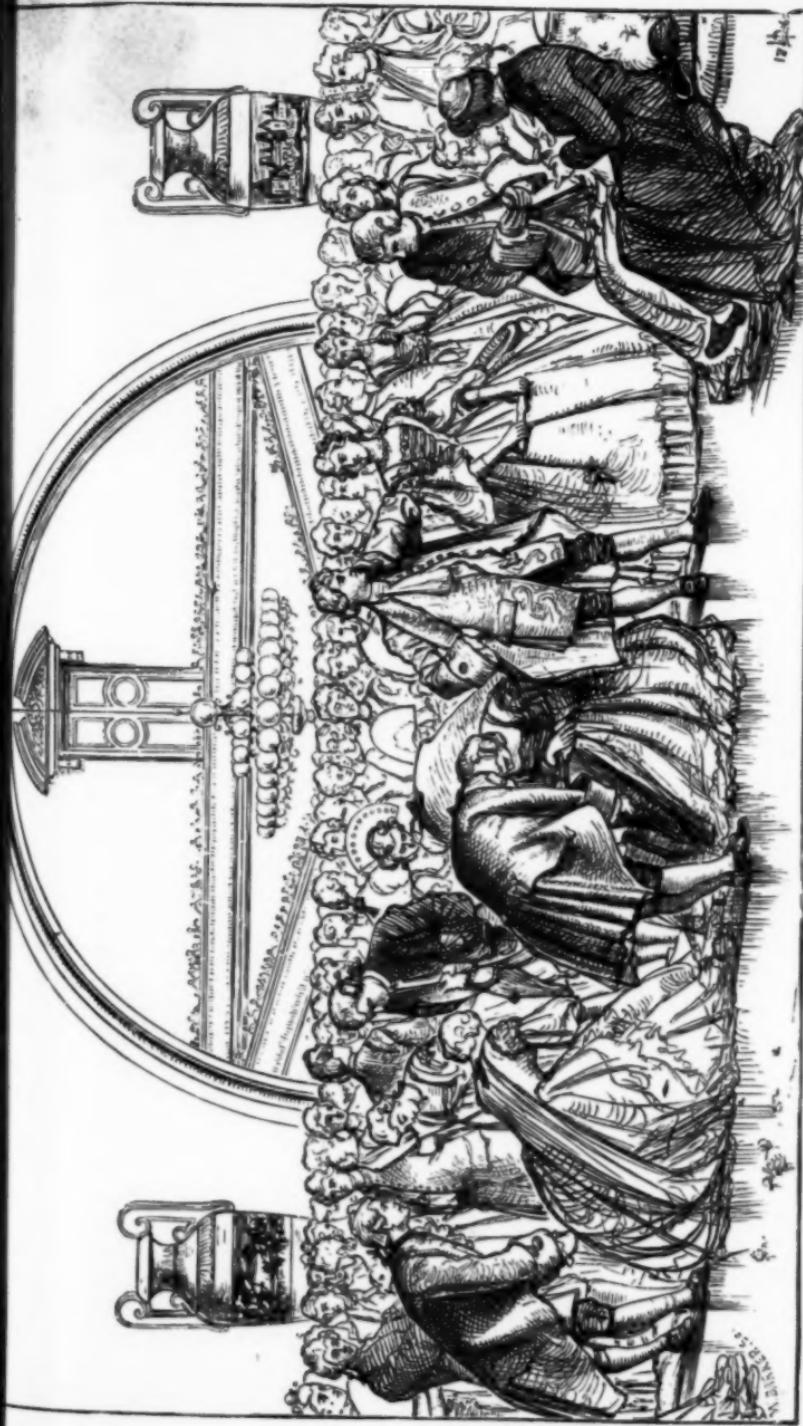
The ball looked more like a ballet than those fashionable *réunions* you and I are accustomed to: everybody seemed to have learnt a part, and all played it to perfection.

To see the dignified and stately deportments—to hear the slow, almost solemn music, choice and recherché conversation, ideal, poetic, interspersed here and there with

witty repartee, you every minute expected to see the great Louis glide in himself. Certain persons, indeed, seemed bent upon making the illusion as complete as possible. The Marquis de la Bretesche took Strasbourg out of a little enamelled box with such Louis Quatorzian grace, and brushed the snuff from his ruffles so elegantly, that many gentlemen took their partners past his sofa, on purpose to observe him. De Courville, who was trying to do the same, could not help sneezing however; as he was sitting about two sofas from the marquis, and was performing the same part grotesquely, he appeared to be the parody of the redoubted De la Bretesche. To every blessing (which his sneezing brought forth) he answered, with that comical look of his, 'Merci! la tabatière est indispensable.'

Lucile de St. Clair created a perfect furore as she swept into the salon, her beautiful round arm resting on the shoulder of a little Moor, who was accoutred in the most bizarre costume imaginable.

This little imp was covered with jewels from head to foot. In his hands he carried an exquisite casket



Drawn by M. J. Lawless.

A BOX ON THE EARS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

[See p. 382.]

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filled with bon-bons, of which he offered to all comers, never forgetting himself. After a little while this little fellow created a sensation in his turn. I saw a crowd collected about the Dowager Courcelles (who was wheeled in that wonderful chair of hers), and, on going to see what was the matter, I discovered a most delicious animated tableau. The poor little Moor, evidently exhausted from his efforts to push through the crowds, the heat of the room, and the weight of his costume, had taken possession of an ottoman covered with crimson satin, crossed his legs, and fallen fast asleep. His casket lay open, the bon-bons and motto-crackers all strewn about him. As if he doubted the respectability of the company around him, his yatagan was half-drawn, and firmly grasped in his hand, whilst his pearlbesprinkled turban served as a pillow to his elbow. It was a perfect picture!—his beautiful costume of emerald green studded with pearls forming a striking contrast with the crimson cushions.

Such little scenes as these amused the company until about one o'clock, when, affairs growing rather dull, it required something '*un peu outre*' to awaken the dormant interest. That something was forthcoming. Several minuets and gavottes had been danced, when his Excellency, coming to our end of the salon, suddenly stopped before the Duke de Surville, next to whom was standing his daughter, Caroline de Surville. Addressing a cold bow to the duke (you know that they have scarcely been on speaking terms since the army dotation squabble), he inquired of Caroline whether she did not intend taking part in a minuet, adding, that he was sure her graceful figure, and so forth—in fact, a very pretty compliment '*à la Louis XIV.*' To which she answered by saying that she would be most happy to take part in one. The old diplomat taking her meaning to be that she would dance with him, saw how far he was compromised, and immediately introduced his nephew; and in a kind of set speech, 'accompanied by all the smirk and elegance of a young Richelieu, answered—

'Mademoiselle, my nephew, the Viscount de Chavigny. Believe me, as age has rapidly enfeebled this wretched body, depriving each limb of strength and agility, I have never regretted it until this moment. The only thing that is left me now is my head; with the eyes I can still admire perfect beauty, and with the mind appreciate it. These poor feeble knees could still bend to worship; but then I fear head, heart, and body would all consume, and be but a poor offering at such a shrine.'

Mdlle. de Surville, quite forgetting that his Excellency was suiting his language to the costume he wore, lost countenance, and rather '*gauchely*' accepted the proffered hand of the viscount, who whispered to me, as his partner was arranging her hoops, that he had never danced a minuet in his life. I did not feel uneasy on his account, however, for I knew he had impudence enough to attempt a *cachucha* if necessary, and that he would get out of it somehow or other.

As the pompous strains of the minuet poured forth, the viscount gravely led his partner to the centre of the salon. The reverences exchanged were perfect, and all eyes turned to admire the lovely Caroline and her graceful dancing. She was really beautiful! No marquise, no Du Barry, Pompadour, or even Mdlle. de la Vallière herself, could have rivalled her. As I prophesied, her coming out was a success—a great success! The old duke was so delighted that he rushed wildly about, his face illuminated with a glow of pride.

The viscount was rather perplexed, and perhaps a *leetle* awkward; but his military bearing helped him, and he would have got out of the '*mauvais pas*' creditably had it not been for a slight circumstance.

It was just that part of the minuet where the music with a '*trillo*' seems to come to the end of a long sentence, and pauses as if to breathe, and when the dancers make a graceful reverence. Mdlle. de Surville's reverence was perfect—her graceful figure curved with all the elegance of a swan's neck; and the viscount's would have been becoming, but that

he gave it in a wrong direction—for when his partner, rising slowly, lifted her eyes, instead of meeting his face, she saw his back! This was irresistible: there was that titter amongst the lookers-on which stands with us as a shout of laughter. The lady turned crimson—purple; and when the viscount came to take her hand, she gave it to him—but, on his cheek!—yes, a clear, ringing box on the ears!—and she rushed off to her father, and was gone! Of course the viscount was the hero of the evening after that. Well, the rest is soon told, and the old duke delights in telling it to all his friends.

The day after the ball the duke called on the viscount to apologize for the little meeting of the evening before. At the same time he was calling on the viscount, that nobleman's carriage was stopping at the duke's mansion.

Chavigny, finding Surville out, and Caroline in the drawing-room, thought he could just as well apologize to the daughter, as she was the principal person concerned, and, after salutations, proceeded to excuse the mistake he had made in such-like words:—

'Mademoiselle, if you remember—last night—'

'Oh yes, monsieur, I remember.'

'Well, mademoiselle—you appear to love dancing passionately?'

'Yes, monsieur.'

'I might say—vigorously—and I think you are right. When you dance you display a—grace and such vivacity—above all a—vivacity—'

'You mean?—'

'I have travelled a great deal—I have seen, I think, every court of Europe dance, and I can safely say (and without flattery) that I have seen nowhere so much easy elegance, distinction without—'

'But you, monsieur, do you never dance then?'

'I? Oh, sometimes—like yesterday—but I have so little success, that to induce me to stand up to expose my natural awkwardness, I must be—surprised—fascinated—'

'Oh, monsieur!'

'Then I lose my head—I forget my incapacity—I go on—go on, until some accident, such as slipping on

the floor, knocking up against a table, or something else—like last night—brings me back to my senses—then I am ashamed of the disorder I have caused, and uncomfortable until such time as I have apologized to my partner, and assured her of my shame and regret.'

'Regrets, monsieur!—but it is I who regret what happened; and I trust you will forget that—that movement of impatience.'

'Forget it?—never!—never!—There is a something so piquant, so charming in that little—little encounter, that I can never forget it. It has kept me awake all night—it trots about in my head—in fact I came here to tell you.'

'But, monsieur—it was so very hasty of me—I am so very hasty!'

'Are you?—so am I. I adore those tempers. I myself am quick, hasty, and boil over in a minute. This very morning I broke a large looking-glass with a boot.'

'And I a whole set of breakfast things.'

'Indeed!—that is charming!—it is so nice to break—smash—'

'Oh yes, it is.'

'And when it's all over, I think no more about it.'

'Just like me.'

'Well, now, mademoiselle, I have a favour to ask of you.'

'Oh, anything. Pray what is it?'

'Would you be kind enough to teach me—'

'What?'

'The minuet.'

'But, monsieur!—'

'Oh, it is that, as I have the intention of asking you often to dance, I should be afraid of fatiguing your—your arm. I beg of you, one little minuet.'

Well, she taught him the minuet, and something else too; for he that same afternoon asked the duke for her hand, and they are to be married in November!

Now, what do you think of that way of getting a husband? That incorrigible De Courville says that when Caroline boxed the viscount's ears, her heart must have been on her hand! Take warning, and don't be too hasty. Adieu—more anon.

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Drawn by C. A. Doyle.

WHAT WE DID AT THE SEASIDE—NOTHING!